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THE CHRISTIANS DEFENCE
against the Fears of DEATH.



THE
CHRISTIAN'S DEFENCE
AGAINST THE
FEARS OF DEATH:

WITH SEASONABLE
DIRECTIONS

HOW TO
PREPARE OURSELVES TO DIE WELL.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN FRENCH,
By the late reverend Divine of the Protestant Church of Paris,
CHARLES DRELINCOURT.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY MARIUS D'ASSIGNY, B. D.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR,
AND HIS LAST MINUTES;
AND A TRUE RELATION OF THE
APPARITION
OF MRS. VEAL, AFTER HER DEATH, TO MRS. BARGRAVE.

The Twenty-sixth Edition.

Liverpool,

PRINTED BY NUTTALL, FISHER, AND DIXON, DUKE-STREET.

1810.

of Chatillon, De Gastion, and Turenne, and by the Lady De la Tremouille, &c. He had also great respect paid him by the frequent visits of ambassadors from several foreign Princes and States. He was a person who expressed a particular esteem and veneration for the church of England, as appears by his Letters to Dr. Durell. He died the 3d of November, 1666, in such an excellent and devout disposition of mind, as may be expected in a person who was animated with an holy zeal, and had, with an unwearied diligence, consecrated all his study and labours to the glory of God, and the service of his church. He was more frequent in prayer towards the conclusion of his life : and when he was private and alone, he never heard the clock strike, but he fell upon his kness in prayer to God.

This is the approved character published of our eminent divine. After a long experience and practice amongst departing souls, and in the houses of mourning, at the request of some of his congregation, who mightily approved of the proper and seasonable arguments that he made use of to fortify dying persons against the apprehensions of death, suitable to the conditions and temper, he published his Book of *Consolations*. About twenty editions have been printed in France, and one at Avignon, in the Pope's dominions, with a suppression of the reverend author's name. How many impressions have been published in Holland, Germany, and elsewhere, I cannot determine. We find it translated into several languages, but was not in our mother tongue, until, at the request of the author's son, late Dean of Armagh in Ireland, I translated it into English. What reception it hath met with amongst us, let this twenty-sixth impression declare. I shall therefore judge it needless, after so many public testimonies of an universal approbation, amongst Christians of all professions, to speak any thing in commendation of this *Defence against the Fears of Death*. How serviceable it may be to divines in funeral sermons, in visiting the sick, the poor, and afflicted, and how proper to be left as legacies to surviving friends, at funerals, I leave others to judge, who shall sincerely desire to promote the salvation of souls.

And now I cannot but take some notice here of the high esteem and commendation that a late Apparition, too well attested to be slighted, hath given of this book. An exact account
of

THE PREFACE.

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of it you have in the printed relation hereunto prefixed. To reject all narratives of this kind as fictitious, argues, in my judgment, as great an error, weakness, and prejudice, as to believe all that is reported of apparitions. This comes to us clothed with all the appearance and circumstances of truth, that may reasonably be expected in this case. So that none but an unbelieving Sadducee, or a profane Atheist, will offer to question the reality. To confirm the possibility and truth of some apparitions, none can deny, that by this means our good God hath conveyed and confirmed to us several of the mysteries of our *holy religion*; as, the conception, birth, incarnation, resurrection, and glorious ascension, of our great Messiah, by the apparition of angels. And how often those heavenly spirits were formerly visible in human shapes for the advantage, information, and safeguard, of the pious, the word of God sufficiently declares. Now, as we live in such an *incredulous age*, that will not believe God and his divine oracles, though attested by the working of miracles, concerning the future state of the righteous and wicked, but requires a new testimony and evidence, as the return of souls from the dead, to witness the happiness of heaven, the torments of hell, and the immortality of the soul; who knows, but to render men more inexcusable, God may condescend that a departed soul, or its good angel in its stead, may appear to declare these infallible and undoubted truths to an unbelieving world? But we find by experience, as in this case, that this kind of evidence is far more liable to exceptions, to be contradicted and rejected, as uncertain and fabulous, and sooner than the sacred methods that our wise God hath taken to persuade men to the divine doctrines of our *salvation*: as Abraham declares in the parable of the rich glutton condemned to the flames of hell, *if they will not believe Moses and the prophets*; we may with more reason add, *if they will not believe CHRIST and his apostles*, and so many wonderful miracles attesting God's omnipotency and revelations from above, *neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead*.

I must here acquaint my reader, that whereas in the former impressions of this book some *errata* have escaped, whereby the author's sense and meaning may not be so clearly expressed as in the original; and *whereas also*, upon some subjects, our reve-

rend author distates the reader by too frequent repetitions in his prayers, containing matters and arguments of the foregoing chapters; these and such trivial objections have caused several persons to find fault, not only with the translation, but even with the book itself. To remedy, therefore, any thing of this nature, and to prevent all complaints of this kind, and that so excellent and useful a *Treatise* may appear in our own proper and natural language, not differing in any thing material from the French copy; but suited, as much as conveniently it may be, to the nicer palates of our present age; I have in this edition taken the pains to compare this *Translation* with a book printed at Berlin, the court of the King of Prussia, 1698. I have been in this more exact, and have altered some words and phrases, expressing more plainly the author's meaning, and in terms more agreeable with our present familiar way of speaking. Besides, in this edition of Berlin, I have met with two or three passages which are not in the former French impressions, and which I judged not convenient to be omitted. Some of the prayers that seemed too prolix, I have abbreviated, comprehending only the principal matters. And that nothing may be wanted in this edition, that might more contribute to the reader's satisfaction, I have here rendered 'in English the last remarkable passages of this pious and excellent minister of *CHARLES*, never before printed in our own tongue, as we find them at the end of the forementioned book; that ye may here at once, as in a mirror, see the behaviour, religious speeches, faith, patience, and resignation to the will of God, of our reverend divine at his decease, reduced into practice, according to the excellent advices and consolations that he recommends to us, to arm ourselves against the apprehensions and approaches of death.

I have no more to add: But I beseech our merciful and heavenly Father to grant us all the grace, the like faith, and christian resolution, that we may not fear death, nor its consequences, but may be always ready prepared and provided to embrace it with joy and submission to the pleasure of God, and the decrees of heaven, whenever our almighty Creator and Redeemer shall think fit to summon us, and to take us to himself.

M. D.

A TRUE
RELATION
OF THE
APPARITION
OF ONE

MRS. VEAL,
THE NEXT DAY AFTER HER DEATH,
TO ONE

MRS. BARGRAVE,

AT
CANTERBURY, the 8th SEPT. 1705;

*Which Apparition recommends the Perusal of Drelincourt's
Book of Consolations against the
Fears of Death.*



A RELATION, &c.

THIS Relation is matter of fact, and attended with such circumstances, as may induce any reasonable man to believe it. It was sent by a gentleman, a justice of peace, at Maidstone in Kent, and a very intelligent person, to his friend in London, as it is herè worded : Which discourse is attested by a very sober and understanding gentlewoman, a kinswoman of the said gentleman's, who lives in Canterbury, within a few doors of the house in which the within-named Mrs. Bargrave lived ; who believes his kinswoman to be of so discerning a spirit, as not to be put upon by any fallacy ; and who positively assured him, that the whole matter, as it is related and laid down, is really true ; and what she herself had in the same words (as near as may be) from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth, who, she knows, had no reason to invent and publish such a story, or any design to forge and tell a lie, being a woman of much honesty and virtue, and her whole life a course, as it were, of piety. The use which we ought to make of it, is to consider, That there is a life to come after this, and a just God, who will retribute to every one according to the deeds done in the body ; and therefore to reflect upon our past course of life we have led in the world ; that our time is short and uncertain ; and that if we would escape the punishment of the ungodly, and receive the reward of the righteous, which is the laying hold of eternal life, we ought, for the time to come, to return to God by a speedy repentance, ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well ; to seek after **GOD** early, if haply he may be found of us, and lead such lives for the future, as may be well-pleasing in his sight.

THIS thing is so rare in all its circumstances, and on so good authority, that my reading and conversation have not given me any thing like it: it is fit to gratify the most ingenious and serious inquirer. Mrs. Bargrave is the person to whom Mrs. Veal appeared after her death: she is my intimate friend, and I can avouch for her reputation for these last fifteen or sixteen years, on my knowledge; and I can confirm the good character she had from her youth, to the time of my acquaintance: though since this relation she is calumniated by some people, that are friends to the brother of Mrs. Veal who appeared, who think the relation of this appearance to be a reflection, and endeavour what they can to blast Mrs. Bargrave's reputation, and to laugh the story out of countenance. But by the circumstances thereof, and the cheerful disposition of Mrs. Bargrave, notwithstanding the ill usage of a very wicked husband, there is not the least sign of dejection in her face; nor did I ever hear her let fall a desponding or murmuring expression; nay, not when actually under her husband's barbarity, which I have been witness to, and several other persons of undoubted reputation.

Now you must know, Mrs. Veal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty years of age, and for some years last past had been troubled with fits, which were perceived coming on by her going off from her discourse very abruptly, to some impertinence: she was maintained by an only brother, and kept his house in Dover. She was a very pious woman, and her brother a very sober man to all appearance; but now he does all he can to null or quash the story. Mrs. Veal was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Bargrave from her childhood. Mrs. Veal's circumstances were then mean: her father did not take care of his children as he ought, so that they were exposed to hardships: And Mrs. Bargrave in those days had as unkind a father, though she wanted neither for food nor clothing, whilst Mrs. Veal wanted

wanted for both, insomuch that she would often say, "Mrs. Bargrave, you are not only the best, but the only friend I have in the world; and no circumstance in life shall ever dissolve my friendship. They would often condole each other's adverse fortunes, and read together *Drelincourt on Death*, and other good books: and so, like two Christian friends, they comforted each other under their sorrow.

Some time after, Mr. Veal's friends got him a place in the Custom-house at Dover, which occasioned Mrs. Veal, by little and little, to fall off from her intimacy with Mrs. Bargrave, though there never was any such thing as a quarrel, but an indifferency came on by degrees, till at last Mrs. Bargrave had not seen her in two years and a half; though above a twelvemonth of the time Mrs. Bargrave hath been absent from Dover, and this last half year hath been in Canterbury about two months of the time, dwelling in an house of her own.

In this house, on the eighth of September, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Five, she was sitting alone in the forenoon, thinking over her unfortunate life, and arguing herself into a due resignation to Providence, though her condition seemed hard: "And," said she, "I have been provided for hitherto, and doubt not but I shall be still; and am well satisfied, that my afflictions shall end when it is most fit for me:" and then took up her sewing work, which she had no sooner done, but she hears a knocking at the door. She went to see who was there, and this proved to be Mrs. Veal, her old friend, who was in a riding habit: at that moment of time the clock struck twelve at noon.

"Madam," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am surprised to see you, you have been so long a stranger:" but told her she was glad to see her, and offered to salute her; which Mrs. Veal

Veal complied with, till their lips almost touched : and then Mrs. Veal drew her hand across her own eyes, and said, " I am not very well ;" and so waved it. She told Mrs. Bargrave she was going a journey, and had a great mind to see her first : " But," says Mrs. Bargrave, " how came you to take a journey alone ? I am amazed at it, because I know you have a fond brother." " Oh !" says Mrs. Veal, " I gave my brother the slip, and came away, because I had so great a desire to see you before I took my journey." So Mrs. Bargrave went in with her into another room within the first ; and Mrs. Veal sat her down in an elbow chair, in which Mrs. Bargrave was sitting when she heard Mrs. Veal knock. Then says Mrs. Veal, " My dear friend, I am come to renew our old friendship again, and beg your pardon for the breach of it : and if you can forgive me, you are the best of women." " Oh !" says Mrs. Bargrave, " do not mention such a thing : I have not had an uneasy thought about it ; I can easily forgive it." " What did you think of me ?" said Mrs. Veal. Says Mrs. Bargrave, " I thought you were like the rest of the world, and that prosperity had made you forget yourself and me." Then Mrs. Veal reminded Mrs. Bargrave of the many friendly offices she did her in former days, and much of the conversation they had with each other in the times of their adversity ; what books they read, and what comfort, in particular, they received from *Drelincourt's Book of Death*, which was the best, she said, on that subject ever written. She also mentioned Dr. Sherlock, the two Dutch books which were translated, written upon death, and several others ; but Drelincourt, she said, had the clearest notions of death, and of the future state, of any who had handled that subject. Then she asked Mrs. Bargrave whether she had Drelincourt ? She said, " Yes." Says Mrs. Veal, " Fetch it." And so Mrs. Bargrave goes up stairs, and brings it down. Says Mrs. Veal, " Dear Mrs. Bargrave, if the eyes of our faith were as open

as the eyes of our body, we should see numbers of angels about us for our guard. The notions we have of heaven now, are nothing like what it is, as Drelincourt says. Therefore be comforted under your afflictions, and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard for you, and that your afflictions are marks of God's favour ; and when they have done the business they are sent for, they shall be removed from you. And believe me, my dear friend, believe what I say to you ; one minute of future happiness will infinitely reward you for all your sufferings ; for I can never believe" [and claps her hands upon her knees with great earnestness, which indeed ran through most of her discourse,] "that ever God will suffer you to spend all your days in this afflicted state : but be assured, that your afflictions will leave you, or you them, in a short time." She spake in that pathetic and heavenly manner, that Mrs. Bargrave wept several times, she was so deeply affected with it.

Then Mrs. Veal mentioned *Dr. Herneck's Ascetic*, at the end of which he gives an account of the lives of the primitive Christians. Their pattern she recommended to our imitation, and said, " Their conversation was not like this of our age : for now," says she, " there is nothing but frothy, vain discourse, which is far different from theirs. Theirs was to edification, and to build one another up in faith ; so that they were not as we are, nor are we as they were : but," said she, " we ought to do as they did. There was a hearty friendship among them ; but where is it now to be found ?" Says Mrs. Bargrave, " It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days." Says Mrs. Veal, " Mr. Norris has a fine copy of verses, called *Friendship in Perfection*, which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book ?" says Mrs. Veal. " No," says Mrs. Bargrave, " but I have the verses of my own writing out." " Have you ?" says Mrs. Veal. " then fetch them." Which she did from above stairs, and offered

offered them to Mrs. Veal to read, who refused, and waved the thing, saying, holding down her head would make it ache ; and then desired Mrs. Bargrave to read them for her, which she did. As they were admiring friendship, Mrs. Veal said, " Dear Mrs. Bargrave, I shall love you for ever." In these verses there is twice used the word *Elyrian*. " Ah ! " says Mrs. Veal, " these poets have such names for heaven ! " She would often draw her hand across her own eyes, and say, " Mrs. Bargrave, do not you think I am mightily impaired by my fits ? " " No," says Mrs. Bargrave, " I think you look as well as ever I knew you."

After all this discourse, which the Apparition put in much finer words than Mrs. Bargrave said she could pretend to, and as much more than she can remember (for it cannot be thought that an hour and three quarter's conversation could be retained, though the main of it she thinks she does,) she said to Mrs. Bargrave, ' She would have her write a letter to her brother, and tell him, she would have him give rings to such and such ; and that there was a purse of gold in her cabinet, and that she would have two broad pieces given to her cousin Watson.'

Talking at this rate, Mrs. Bargrave thought that a fit was coming upon her, and so placed herself in a chair just before her knees, to keep her from falling to the ground, if her fits should occasion it, (for the elbow chair, she thought, would keep her from falling on either side,) and to divert Mrs. Veal, as she thought, took hold of her gown sleeve several times, and commended it. Mrs. Veal told her it was a scoured silk, and newly made up. But for all this, Mrs. Veal persisted in her request ; and told Mrs. Bargrave she must not deny her. And she would have her tell her brother all their conversation, when she had opportunity. " Dear Mrs. Veal," says Mrs. Bargrave, " this seems so impertinent, that I cannot tell how to comply with it : and
what

what a mortifying story will our conversation be to a young gentleman !” “ Why,” says Mrs. Bargrave, “ it is much better methinks to do it yourself.” “ No,” says Mrs. Veal, though it seems impertinent to you now, you will see more reason for it hereafter. Mrs. Bargrave then, to satisfy her importunity, was going to fetch a pen and ink ; but Mrs. Veal said, “ Let it alone now, but do it when I am gone ; but you must be sure to do it.” Which was one of the last things she enjoined her at parting : and so she promised her.

Then Mrs. Veal asked for Mrs. Bargrave’s daughter ; she said she was not at home. “ But if you have a mind to see her,” says Mrs. Bargrave, “ I’ll send for her.” “ Do,” says Mrs. Veal. On which she left her, and went to a neighbour’s to see for her ; and by the time Mrs. Bargrave was returning, Mrs. Veal was got without the door into the street, in the face of the beast-market on a Saturday, which is market day, and stood ready to part, as soon as Mrs. Bargrave came to her. She asked her why she was in such haste. She said, She must be going, though perhaps she might not go her journey till Monday : and told Mrs. Bargrave she hoped she would see her again at her cousin Watson’s before she went whither she was going. Then she said, she would take her leave of her, and walked from Mrs. Bargrave in her view, till a turning interrupted the sight of her, which was three quarters after one in the afternoon.

Mrs. Veal died the 7th of September, at twelve o’clock at noon, of her fits, and had not above four hours’ senses before death, in which time she received the sacrament. The next day after Mrs. Veal’s appearing, being Sunday, Mrs. Bargrave was mightily indisposed with a cold and a sore throat, that she could not go out that day ; but on Monday morning she sent a person to Capt. Watson’s, to know if Mrs. Veal was there. They wondered at Mrs. Bargrave’s inquiry ;

inquiry : and sent her word that she was not there, nor was expected. At this answer, Mrs. Bargrave told the maid she had certainly mistook the name, or made some blunder. And though she was ill, she put on her hood, and went herself to Capt. Watson's, though she knew none of the family, to see if Mrs. Veal was there or not. They said, they wondered at her asking, for that she had not been in town; they were sure, if she had, she would have been there. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "I am sure she was with me on Saturday almost two hours." They said it was impossible; for they must have seen her if she had. In comes Capt. Watson, while they were in dispute, and said that Mrs. Veal was certainly dead, and her escutcheons were making. This strangely surprised Mrs. Bargrave; when she sent to the person immediately who had the care of them, and found it true. Then she related the whole story to Capt. Watson's family, and what gown she had on, and how striped; and that Mrs. Veal told her it was scoured. Then Mrs. Watson cried out, "You have seen her indeed, for none knew but Mrs. Veal and myself, that the gown was scoured. And Mrs. Watson owned that she described the gown exactly: "For," said she, "I helped her to make it up." This Mrs. Watson blazed all about the town, and avouched the demonstration of the truth of Mrs. Bargrave's seeing Mrs. Veal's apparition. And Captain Watson carried two gentlemen immediately to Mrs. Bargrave's house to hear the relation from her own mouth. And when it spread so fast, that gentlemen and persons of quality, the judicious and sceptical part of the world, flocked in upon her, it at last became such a task, that she was forced to go out of the way; for they were, in general, extremely satisfied of the truth of the thing, and plainly saw that Mrs. Bargrave was no hypochondriac: for she always appears with such a cheerful air, and pleasing mien, that she has gained the favour and esteem of all the gentry: and it is thought a great favour if they can but get the relation from her own mouth.

mouth. I should have told you before, that Mrs. Veal told Mrs. Bargrave, that her sister and brother-in-law were just come down from London to see her. Says Mrs. Bargrave, "How came you to order matters so strangely?" "It could not be helped," said Mrs. Veal. And her brother and sister did come to see her, and entered the town of Dover just as Mrs. Veal was expiring. Mrs. Bargrave asked her whether she would drink some tea. Says Mrs. Veal, "I do not care if I do; but I'll warrant you, this mad fellow [meaning Mrs. Bargrave's husband] has broke all your trinkets. "But," says Mrs. Bargrave, "I'll get something to drink in for all that;" but Mrs. Veal waved it, and said, "It is no matter, let it alone:" and so it passed.

All the time I sat with Mrs. Bargrave, which was some hours, she recollected fresh sayings of Mrs. Veal. And one material thing more she told Mrs. Bargrave, that old Mr. Breton allowed Mrs. Veal ten pounds a year; which was a secret, and unknown to Mrs. Bargrave till Mrs. Veal told it her.

Mrs. Bargrave never varies in her story; which puzzles those who doubt the truth, or are unwilling to believe it. A servant in the neighbour's yard, adjoining to Mrs. Bargrave's house, heard her talking to somebody an hour of the time Mrs. Veal was with her. Mrs. Bargrave went out to her next neighbour's the very moment she parted with Mrs. Veal, and told her what ravishing conversation she had with an old friend, and told the whole of it. Drelincourt's Book of Death is, since this happened, bought up strangely. And it is to be observed, that notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue Mrs. Bargrave has undergone upon this account, she never took the value of a farthing, nor suffered her daughter to take any thing of any body, and therefore can have no interest in telling the story.

But Mr. Veal does what he can to stifle the matter, and said, he would see Mrs. Bargrave ; but yet it is certain matter of fact, that he has been at Capt. Watson's since the death of his sister, and yet never went near Mrs. Bargrave ; and some of his friends report her to be a liar, and that she knew of Mr. Breton's ten pounds a year. But the person who pretends to say so, has the reputation of a notorious liar, among persons whom I know to be of undoubted credit. Now Mr. Veal is more of a gentleman than to say she lies ; but says, a bad husband has crazed her. But she needs only present herself, and it will effectually confute that pretence. Mr. Veal says, he asked his sister on her death-bed whether she had a mind to dispose of any thing, and she said, " No." Now the things which Mrs. Veal's apparition would have disposed of were so trifling, and nothing of justice aimed at in their disposal, that the design of it appears to me to be only in order to make Mrs. Bargrave so to demonstrate the truth of her appearance, as to satisfy the world of the reality thereof, as to what she had seen and heard, and to secure her reputation among the reasonable and understanding part of mankind. And then again, Mr. Veal owns that there was a purse of gold ; but it was not found in her cabinet, but in a comb box. This looks improbable ; for that Mrs. Watson owned, that Mrs. Veal was so very careful of the key of the cabinet, that she would trust nobody with it. And if so, no doubt she would not trust her gold out of it. And Mrs. Veal's often drawing her hand over her eyes, and asking Mrs. Bargrave whether her fits had not impaired her, looks to me as if she did it on purpose to remind Mrs. Bargrave of her fits, to prepare her not to think it strange, that she should put her upon writing to her brother, to dispose of rings and gold, which looks so much like a dying person's request ; and it took accordingly with Mrs. Bargrave, as the effects of her fits coming upon her ; and was one of the many instances of her

her wonderful love to her, and care of her, that she should not be affrighted; which indeed appear in her whole management, particularly in her coming to her in the day-time, waving the salutation, and when she was alone; and then the manner of her parting, to prevent a second attempt to salute her.

Now, why Mr. Veal should think this relation a reflection (as it is plain he does by his endeavouring to stifle it) I cannot imagine; because the generality believe her to be a good spirit, her discourse was so heavenly. Her two great errands were to comfort Mrs. Bargrave in her affliction, and to ask her forgiveness for the breach of friendship, and with a pious discourse to encourage her: So that, after all, to suppose that Mrs. Bargrave could hatch such an invention as this, from Friday noon to Saturday noon, (supposing that she knew of Mrs. Veal's death the very first moment,) without jumbling circumstances, and without any interest too, she must be more witty, fortunate, and wicked too, than any indifferent person, I dare say, will allow. I asked Mrs. Bargrave several times, if she was sure she felt the gown: she answered modestly, "If my senses may be relied on, I am sure of it." I asked her if she heard a sound when she clapped her hand upon her knee. She said she did not remember she did; but said she appeared to be as much a substance as I did who talked with her. "And I may," said she, "be as soon persuaded that your apparition is talking to me now, as that I did not really see her: for I was under no manner of fear, and received her as a friend, and parted with her as such. I would not," says she, "give one farthing to make any one believe it: I have no interest in it: nothing but trouble is entailed upon me for a long time, for ought I know; and had it not come to light by accident, it would never have been made public." But now, she says, she will make her own private use of it, and

keep herself out of the way as much as she can ; and so she has done since. She says, " She had a gentleman who came thirty miles to her to hear the relation ; and that she had told it to a room-full of people at a time." Several particular gentlemen have had the story from Mrs. Bargrave's own mouth.

This thing has very much affected me, and I am as well satisfied as I am of the best-grounded matter of fact. And why we should dispute matter of fact, because we cannot solve things of which we can have no certain or demonstrative notions, seems strange to me. Mrs. Bargrave's authority and sincerity alone would have been undoubted in any other case.



THE
Christian's Consolations

AGAINST THE
FEARS OF DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

*That there is nothing more dreadful than Death, to such as have
no hope in God.*

AN inspired pen styles Death, very significantly, *The King of Terrors*; that is to say, the most terrible of all other things: for there is nothing that we can imagine in the world more dreadful and more frightful than Death. It is possible to decline the edge of drawn swords, to close the lion's jaws, to quench the fire's fury; but when Death shoots its poisoned arrows, when it opens its infernal pit, and when it sends forth its devouring flames, it is altogether impossible to secure ourselves; impossible it is to guard ourselves from its merciless fury. There is an infinite number of warlike inventions, by which we commonly defeat the evil designs of the most powerful and dreadful enemies; there is no stratagem of the most renowned general, no fortifications ever so regular and artificial, nor army ever so victorious, that can retard but for a moment the approaches of Death, this last enemy. In the twinkling of an eye it flies
through

through the strongest bulwarks, the deepest walls, and most prodigious towers. It leaps over the largest ditches, the highest castles, and the most inaccessible rocks. It blows down the strongest barricadoes, and laughs at all our military trenches; every where it finds the weakness of our armour, and through the best tempered breastplate it strikes the proudest hearts. In the darkest dungeon it comes to us, and snatches us out of the hands of our most trusty and watchful guards. In a word, nature and art can furnish us with nothing able to protect us from Death's cruel and insatiable hands.

There is none so barbaous, but is sometimes overcome by the prayers and tears of such as cast themselves upon their knees to implore mercy; nay, such as have lost all sense of humanity and goodness, commonly spare in their rage the weakest age and sex: but unmerciful Death hath no more regard of such as humble themselves, than of others that resist and defy it. It takes no notice of infants' tears and cries; it plucks them from the breasts of their tender-hearted mothers, and crushes them in pieces before their eyes. It scorns the lamentations of dainty dames, and delights to trample upon their most ravishing beauties. It stops its ears to the requests of trembling old age, and casts to the ground the gray heads as so many withered oaks.

At a battle, when princes and generals of the enemy's army are taken prisoners, they are not treated as common soldiers; but unmerciful Death treads under feet as audaciously the prince as the subject, the master as the servant, the noble as the vassal, the rich Dives and the begging Lazarus together. It blows out with the same blast the most glorious luminaries, and the most loathsome lamps. It hath no more respect for the crowns of kings, the pope's mitre, and the cardinal's cap, than for the shepherd's crook, or the slave's chains.

chains. It heaps them together, shuts them in the same dungeon, and in the same mortar pounds them to powder.

There is no war, though ever so furious and bloody, but it is interrupted with some days, or at least some hours, of cessation or truce; nay, the most inhuman minds are at last tired with bloody conquests: but insatiable Death never saith, "It is enough." At every hour and moment it cuts down whole nations and kindreds. The flesh of all the animals that have lived and died since the creation of the world, hath not been able to glut this devouring monster.

All warfare is doubtful: he that wins the victory to-day, may soon after be put to flight. He that rides at present in a triumphant chariot, may become the footstool of his enemy. But Death is always victorious; it triumphs with an insufferable insolence over all the kings and nations of the earth; it never returns to its den but loaden with spoils, and glutted with blood. The strongest Samsons, and the most victorious Davids, who have torn in pieces and overcome lions and bears, and cut off the heads of giants, have at last yielded themselves, and been cut off by Death. The great Alexander, and the triumphant Cesars, who have made all the world to tremble before them, and conquered most part of the habitable earth, could never find any thing that might protect them from Death's power. When magnificent statues and stately trophies were raised to their honour, Death laughed at their vanity, and made sport with their persons. The rich marbles, where so many proud titles are engraved, cover nothing but a little rotten flesh, and a few bones which Death hath broken and reduced to ashes.

We read, in the revelation of the prophet Daniel, that king Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream a large statue of gold, both glorious and terrible; "its head was of pure gold, its breast

breast and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet were partly of clay, and partly of iron." As the prince was beholding it with astonishment, a little stone cut out of a mountain, without hands, was rolled against the feet of this prodigious statue, and broke it all to pieces; not only the clay and iron were broken, but also the gold, the silver, and the brass; all became as the chaff, which the wind blows to and fro. This great image represents the four universal monarchies of the world: that of Babylon, of the Persians and Medes, of the Greeks, and that of the Romans. It represents also the vanity and inconstancy of all things under the sun: for what is the pomp, the glory, the strength, and dignities, of this world, but as a smoke driven with the wind, and a vapour that soon vanishes away? All is like a shadow, that flies from us: or like a dream, that disappears in an instant. Man, created in the image of God, at his first appearance seems to be very glorious for a while, and becomes terrible: but as soon as Death strikes at the earthly part, and begins to break his flesh and bones, all the glory, pomp, power, and magnificence, of the richest, of the most terrible and victorious monarchs, are changed into a loathsome smell, into contemptible dust, and reduced to nothing: "vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Since therefore Death is so impartial as to spare none, and its power so great that none can escape or resist it, it is no wonder if it is become so terrible, and fills with fear, grief, and despair, the minds of all mortals, who have not settled their faith and assurance on God. For there is no condemned prisoner but trembles when he beholds the scaffold erecting, upon which he is designed to be broken upon a wheel, or when he spies in the fire, irons with which he is to be pinched to death.

In the midst of a sumptuous feast, king Belshazzar saw the
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fingers of a man's hand writing these words upon the wall of his palace ; " Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin ;" which the prophet Daniel hath thus interpreted ; " Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it ; Tekel, Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting ; Perez, or Upharsin, Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." As soon as this great monarch had cast his eyes upon this miraculous writing, it is said, that his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. Certainly the proud worldling has a greater cause to be dismayed in the midst of his glory and pleasures, when he may perceive Death writing upon every wall of his house in visible characters, and printing upon his forehead, that " God hath numbered his days," and this, in which he now breathes, shall be soon followed by an eternal night ; that God hath weighed him in the balance of his justice, and found him as light as the wind ; and that the almighty Creator, unto whom vengeance belongs, will soon divest him of all his glory and riches, to clothe therewith his enemies. What comforts can be found for the wretched sinners, who do not only understand their final sentence, but also hear the thundering voice of the great Judge of the world exasperated by their impieties ? They may now perceive hell prepared to swallow them up, and the fiery chains of that doleful prison ready to embrace them. They may at present feel the hands of the executioner of divine justice, that seize upon them already, and see themselves before stretched and tortured in that place, where there shall be nothing but weeping and horrible gnashing of teeth. At present they may feel the fierce approaches of that fire and brimstone which is the second death ; for it may be justly said of these wretched varlets, That hell cometh to them before they go to hell ; and that in this life they have a presension of the grievous pangs of their future torments : therefore some

of them in despair offer violence to themselves, and commit an horrid murder upon their own persons, as if they were afraid not to die by a hand wicked enough. The expectation of Death to them, is more insufferable than Death itself; and they had rather cast themselves into the bottomless pit of hell, than endure the apprehensions and fears of hell in their guilty consciences; and to be delivered of the flashes of hell-fire, and mount up their souls in this life, they cast themselves in a brutish manner into that unquenchable burning.

That which is most terrible is, that the horrid and insufferable fears that seize upon the wicked, are not short and transitory; for as a criminal that knows there is a sentence of death pronounced against him, continually thinks upon those torments that are preparing for him; as soon as he hears the door unlocking, or a fly buzzing at his ears, he imagines that some are entering to drag him from his prison to execution. In some sense he desires what he apprehends, and hastens the approach of that which he wishes, but cannot avoid. Thus desperate sinners, that know there is a sentence of eternal death proclaimed against them in the court of the King of kings, and that from this sentence there is no appeal nor escape, must needs be in continual fears. Such foresee the fearful image of Death, that disturbs their quiet; and, as St. Paul expresses himself, "through fear of Death they are all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 15. That is, they are like so many wretched slaves, that tremble under the inhuman power of a merciless tyrant.

I know that there be some Atheists who talk of Death with contempt or scorn, and who make an open profession of braving Death without the least sense of fear; nevertheless, they feel in their souls some secret thorns, with which Death often galls them; some fears and apprehensions, with
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which it tortures and disquiets them, when they dream least of it. It is true, they, for the most part, boast of not fearing the approaches of Death, and laugh at it, when they imagine that it is at a distance from them ; but these are they who are most apt to tremble at the near and grim countenance of Death, and soonest discover their weakness and despair.

If there be any that seem to-laugh at Death, their laughter is only an appearance upon the lips. They are like a child newly born, that seems to smile, when it is inwardly tormented in the bowels ; or like those that eat of the famous herb mentioned by the herbalist, which causes a pleasant laughter to appear upon the lips of such, into whose noble parts it conveys a mortal poison that kills them.

There be some, I confess, that die without any concern ; but these are either brutish or senseless persons, much like unto a sleeping drunkard, who may be cast down a precipice, without any knowledge or foresight of the danger ; or they be pleasant mockers, who are like the foolish criminals, who go merrily to the gallows ; or they be such as are full of rage and fury, whom I may well compare to an enraged wild boar, that runs himself in the huntsman's snare : such monsters of men deserve not to be reckoned among rational and understanding creatures.

CHAP. II.

That in all the Heathen Philosophers, there is no solid and true comfort against the fears and apprehensions of Death.

THERE are certain empirics, that seem at the first discourse to be very well skilled in their art, that talk of diseases and of their causes most learnedly and acutely, and nevertheless,

nevertheless, in their practice they are both unhappy and ignorant. Their unseasonable learning disturbs the patient more than their physic eases him, and increases the sufferings of the languishing body. These kind of physicians very well describe to us in this particular the properties of the Heathen Philosophers; for when they represent the calamities of our human condition, they sharpen their wits, and discover all their skill and rhetoric. Some of them laugh ingenuously at our miseries; others artificially weep to behold them. But in all their writings and tragic expressions, we find not any solid and sincere comforts to strengthen us against the apprehensions of Death. Therefore their contemptible and vain fancies oblige us to tell them, as Job his troublesome friends, "Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay," Job xiii. 12. It is true, some of those learned philosophers have very well spoken, that we begin to die as soon as we begin to breathe; that our life is like unto a candle that lives by its consumption, whereof the flame devours and consumes it. For the natural heat that entertains our life, insensibly undermines it; it is that which spends our radical moisture, that yields the same benefits to our life, as oil to a lamp, or wax to a taper.

Others have as well said, that our present life is but a swift race from one mother to another. They meant, from the womb of our mothers that brought us into the world, into the womb and bosom of the earth that will receive us at last; for as soon as we are born, we run a swift race towards our grave. At that instant, when we fly from Death, we approach insensibly towards it; and, contrary to our intention, we cast ourselves into its embraces. Some of the same school have compared man to a bubble upon the water, that rises and swells, and immediately decreases and breaks. Others make him like unto the waterish bottles of divers colours, that children blow with their breath, and destroy with the same.

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In truth, all man's beauty is but a vain appearance, that vanishes away in an instant, Isa. xl. "All flesh is like grass, and all the glory of man like the flower of the field," 1 Pet. i.

One of these great philosophers, being asked what the life of man was, answered never a word; because such a question deserved none, or rather because he would imitate the custom of his age, of speaking by guess, and symbolical representations. For that purpose he entered into a chamber, and passed out again at the same instant, to signify to his disciples that questioned him, that man's life is but an entrance in, and an egress out of the world; the one succeeds immediately the other.

Another of the same sect walked in a bravado two or three turns, and then shrunk into a pit, to show that our life is but a kind of masquerade, a vain appearance that soon vanishes. When men have well admired themselves in their splendour, and have drawn to them the looks and esteem of the world, Death surprises them, and spoils all their lustre, and covers their borrowed glory in a mournful grave. It is with us as with actors in a comedy; the one represents a king, the other an emperor; the one a counsellor, the other a minister of state; but when the comedy is ended, and the garments changed, you know not which is which. We are all like counters upon a table: some signify units, others tens, others hundreds, and others thousands and millions; but when they are shuffled together, and put again into the purse, the vast difference appears no more. This is a lively image of all mankind: for in this life some appear on a throne, others are seated upon a dunghill; some flourish in golden and silken attire, others are clothed in nakedness; some command as princes, others submit as galley-slaves; some are fed with exquisite dainties, others must be content with the bread of affliction. Put
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when Death has cast them all into their graves together; then they appear without any distinction.

All these witty expressions, and others of the like nature, are pleasant and true; they teach well, and flatter the fancy; but they afford no real comforts. Therefore to all these learned doctors we may say, as Job by the way of reproach to his friends that added sorrow to his affliction, "You are all physicians of no value. How then comfort ye me in vain?" Job xiii. 9. When a patient is afflicted with the tortures of an unmerciful gout, or of the stone in the kidneys, that force from him every moment most grievous sighs and groans, if any should offer to paint before him his looks and grimaces, or should counterfeit them ingeniously in his presence, he would bring him little ease to his torments, but rather increase his vexation and trouble. The most beautiful flower also can give no delight to such as are racked in the executioner's hand, or tied to four horses that are ready to tear him to pieces. Thus it is with the most eloquent and florid discourse; it can bring no comfort to a soul that is departing: David's harp alone can drive away evil spirits, and appease the troubles of a wounded conscience.

But some may imagine, in this general survey of the wise follies and vanity of the Heathen philosophers, I should except the Stoicks. I confess, in this particular, they express more gravity, but they proceed with no better success; nay, when I have well considered them, I find them to be far more insufferable and impertinent than the rest; for besides that they treat of the immortality of the soul in a very doubtful and inconsistent manner, the pretended comforts that they offer render Death more dreadful.

They tell us, that death is the end and centre where all human afflictions and miseries cease; therefore it is rather
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to be desired, than avoided or feared. They might have some colourable reason for this conclusion, if they did but discover beyond the grave an happiness which they might now expect and hope ; for Death assures them of no other comfort, but only to put a period to all the miseries of this wretched life. Therefore such kind of discourses are not properly comforts ; and the resolution that they beget in us is but a silly passion, much like that of a criminal upon the rack, who impatiently wishes for Death, that he might be delivered from the cruel hands of the executioner ; and longs, to be put out of these torments, to get on the scaffold where he is to be broken upon the wheel. O miserable wretch ! the change of tortures will bring no ease to thy pains. If thou canst not endure patiently the ropes that un-joint thy limbs, how wilt thou suffer the bars of iron that shall crack all thy bones in pieces ? O blind philosopher ! if thou canst not bear the miseries of this life, how wilt thou endure the agonies of death !

Moreover they tell us, that the most cruel and painful death is a noble occasion to exercise our virtue, and to cause our constancy and resolution to appear with admiration. This discourse seems to be plausible, but in reality is nothing but wind : for what availeth this apparent virtue ? It hinders us not from falling into the deepest abyss of torment and misery, but perishes and dies with its idolaters : therefore such as have most admired it, have at last acknowledged it to be but a shadow ; witness that famous and worthy general, who fancied that his virtue would procure him the victory over all the enemies of the Commonwealth, in whose quarrel he took up arms. When the battle was lost, and all his ambitious hopes had deceived him, being ready to stab himself with his own sword, he cried out, “ O miserable virtue ! what art thou but a vain unprofitable word, a name without a body ! ” He thus exclaimed against his virtue, that he had formerly adored,

adored, because it could yield him no comfort in the day of his distress, nor free him from falling into utter despair.

The most ordinary and useful comforts they commonly bring, are these: That death is inevitable; that we all enter into the world, upon condition to go out; that we have as much cause to be afflicted with the day of our birth, as with the day of our death; that humanity and immortality are not consistent; that death is a tribute we all owe to nature; that the kings and greatest monarchs are forced to pay it, as well as the meanest subjects; and that this is such an universal law, that it admits of no exception.

But these kinds of comforts increase our trouble, and add to our affliction. I have therefore good reason to speak to these grave philosophers in Job's language to his troublesome friends, "Miserable comforters are ye all:" for, in truth, they do not only search the wound to the quick, without any application of an healing plaster, but they also tear and widen it, inflame and render it far more grievous. When we are in hopes of seeing an end to our calamities, our mind is comforted, and arms itself with constancy, and a patient resolution; but when we see ourselves cast into an abyss of evil, and that no hopes appear of getting out, we are then overwhelmed with grief and despair. It is a lamentable thing to be born to die; but it is far more lamentable and grievous to know that death is not to be avoided, that all the treasures of the world cannot free us from it; for his affliction is greatest whose misery cannot be cured.

§ This also is a false and deceitful maxim, that the comfort of the miserable is to have companions in misery. Though many thousands drink together of the waters of Marah, they seem no less bitter; and although thou shouldest be burnt in a fire where many are consumed, thou shalt not find there a

more easy abode. Thy neighbour's grief does not lessen thy affliction : their sickness cannot restore to thee health, nor their death comfort thee against the approaches of thine own. On the contrary, if thou hast any sense of humanity, thou wilt weep for their misery and thine together. It is that which great Xerxes, king of Persia, practised : for upon a review of his numerous army, in which there were 1,700,000 men, he, considering that within an hundred years so many brave captains and soldiers would be rotting in their graves, was moved with compassion, and wept. I mention not here the brutish and foolish opinion of such who imagine that man's soul is mortal, and perishes with the body. This consideration brings no comfort, but brings us into an irrecoverable despair ; for, besides the torments of hell-fire, there is nothing that can be imagined more dreadful than a reducement to non-entity.

It is also needless to mention the Platonists, who have discoursed of the soul's immortality, and of its blessedness after this life. They imagine themselves very acute and subtile : but their discourses of this matter are so gross and extravagant, that instead of persuading to the truth, they expose it to scorn and contempt. Let their fond and imaginary description of the Elysian fields be witnesses ; for whatsoever hath been invented of this kind hath been reckoned among the fables and poetical fictions. Those chimerical gardens and grounds contain nothing like to the divine excellencies and unspeakable pleasures of the paradise of God.

In a word, seek amongst the rarest and most precious treasures of wit and learning of the Heathen antiquity ; turn over the writings of the most eloquent orators, of the subtilest philosophers, of the most famous poets ; examine the secrets of the most experienced physicians, consider their practice, and all the remedies they prescribe to the

soul, and you shall find them too unskilful to perform the least cure. They do but charm and flatter the disease; they harden us against evil; they furnish us with a good exterior, and teach us to bear a good mien; but they have no real antidote against the venom that kills the principle of life; nor the remedy that reaches to the heart: and as torrents, that dry up in the hottest seasons, such consolations that flow not from the fountain of life, vanish away without effect, and dry up to nothing, when a deep sorrow, fear, and affliction, seize upon a sinful soul.

It seems the compilers of the Heathen religion were sensible of this truth; for they dedicated temples, and erected altars, to all manner of gods and goddesses; not only to virtues and health, but also to vices and diseases, to fear, cowardice, anger, the fever, the pestilence, and an infinite number more; but they left Death out of their devotions. This is an open declaration, that they knew not how to strike acquaintance with Death, and win its esteem and favour. They had no sacrifice nor incense that could allay its fury; they looked upon it as their most inhuman and irreconcilable enemy. The very name of Death terrified them: therefore it was one of their most unfortunate omens.

Adrian the emperor is a witness of what I say: he was one of the greatest princes in former ages; he made most parts of the habitable world yield to his sceptre, and put to death an infinite number of men; but at last he trembled, and was astonished himself at the approaches of Death: he had overcome the most barbarous nations, and tamed the most savage beasts; but when he came to his last enemy, he had no weapon fit for the encounter. Therefore, on this occasion, he discovers the weakness and inconstancy of his mind, far more disturbed than his body was with the disease. Sometimes he employed the magic art to retard
Death;

Death; sometimes he made use of his sword and poison to hasten it; at last he killed himself by an abstinence from food, necessary to entertain his life. He had conquered all the world, and given peace and happiness to his empire: but he could not overcome himself, or appease the troubles of his conscience. He was so far from quieting the disturbed thoughts of his soul, that he suffered himself to be overwhelmed with despair; he flattered his soul in hastening its ruin; for when his disease gave him liberty to breathe, he talked unto it in this manner: "My little soul, my dearest companion, thou art now going to wander in obscure, cold, and strange places; thou shalt never jest again, according to thy wonted manner; thou shalt never give me any more sport or pleasure."

You will say, Adrian was a powerful monarch, but no great philosopher; perhaps he knew how to govern, and was well acquainted with politics; but he was ignorant of morals, and had no skill to die well. To answer this objection, let us give an example beyond all exception:—Aristotle is generally esteemed to have been the subtlest and the most learned of the Heathen antiquity, the prince of all the philosophers, the glory of his age, and the founder of his sect: when his excellent soul had surveyed all things, examined the heavens, searched among the excellencies of the earth, pried into all the wonders of the world, and found out the rarest secrets of nature, he could never find any solid comfort against the apprehensions of death. Notwithstanding all his admirable subtilties, and his profound learning, the fear of this cruel Death terrifies his conscience in such a manner, that he confessed, "That of all terrible things Death was the most dreadful."

CHAP. III.

Of divers Sorts of Death, with which we are to encounter.

WHEN David had a design to fight with Goliath, and could not make use of the armour of king Saul, he took a smooth stone out of his bag, cast it with his sling, struck the Philistine in the forehead, and brought down this proud giant, who had defied the armies of Israel. We have already examined and tried all the armour of human wisdom and learning, laid up in the store-houses of the greatest wits of former ages ; and we have found that they are not able to afford us any assistance in an encounter with Death. Let us, therefore, now see whether we may overcome this proud enemy with the sling of our mystical David, with the weapons of our divine Shepherd : but before we begin the resistance, let us look and behold it in the face. The enemy I intend you shall overcome, is a monster with three heads ; for there are three sorts of death, the natural, the ~~S~~piritual, and the eternal.

The natural death is a separation of the soul from the body. Although our body has been fashioned with the finger of God, it is but a weak and frail vessel, made of earth : but our soul is an heavenly, spiritual, and immortal substance ; it is a sparkle and a ray of the Godhead, and the lively image of our great Creator : for when God had made our first parent, " he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," Gen. ii. 7. that we might thereby understand, that our souls alone proceeded from his immediate hand, therefore he is named the " Father of spirits," Heb. xii. and " the faithful Creator of souls," 1 Pet. iv. This soul raises us a degree above all animals, and above the celestial bodies, and renders us like the angels of heaven. It is the light that enlightens us, the salt that preserves us from corruption. In one word, by this soul we live, enjoy our senses, move, and understand.

understand. As soon as this angelical guest leaves its mansion, the body, it loses all its beauty, and falls of itself into a state of ruin ; for this flesh that we are so careful of, and feed with all manner of dainties, then corrupts and rots. After that it hath been stretched awhile upon beds of gold, and richly attired in purple and scarlet, it is cast upon a bed of worms, and covered with the vilest insects of the earth. Notwithstanding all its former perfumes, it yields then a most horrid stink. Before, it ravished the eyes of the beholders with its admirable beauty ; but now it becomes so odious and offensive, that the living care not to see it. It is at last reduced to ashes, according to the sentence that was pronounced in the earthly paradise, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

The spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God our Creator ; for he being the soul of our souls, and the light of our life, we fall into an abyss of darkness and death : "For all those that depart from God shall perish," Psalm lxxiii. As the members, when they are cut off from the body, commonly rot ; as the twig withers, when it is separated from the vine ; so, in a separation from God, we can neither live, move, nor have a being. And as it is with the body separated from the soul, it nourishes a nest of worms that devour it, and sends forth a most insufferable stench ; so it is with our souls at a distance from God ; it yields those evil affections that torment and consume it, and the ill scent of its crimes is offensive to heaven and earth. Of this kind of death our Saviour speaks to the Jews in this manner ; "If ye do not believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," John viii. And to the angel of the church at Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," Rev. iii. The same death St. Paul mentions in the second chapter of the Colossians, and the second of the Ephesians ; "When we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ." And elsewhere he ex-
horts

horts a sinful man, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. And it is of the same kind of death that St. Paul speaks concerning the wanton widow, that "she is dead while she liveth," 1 Tim. v.

It was this kind of death that Adam suffered as soon as he had tasted of the forbidden fruit, according to God's threatening; "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death." For not only his body became subject to death, but his soul was also cast into the death of sin, and enslaved to corruption. It happened to him as to a lamp newly put out; the snuff yields a most ill-savoured scent.

As the life of grace is a preparative to the life of glory, and furnishes us with the foretaste of the heavenly joys; so, on the contrary, the carnal life is as it were the suburbs of hell; it is the first beginning of an eternal death, and the entrance into the infernal pit. The eternal death is nothing else but an entire and irrecoverable separation of the soul and body from God, accompanied with infinite torments; torments unto which all the sufferings of this mortal life are light and inconsiderable: nevertheless, as the Spirit of God represents the heavenly joys and felicities by things that are most pleasant and delightful; so, to express to us hell-torments, it borrows things that are the most dreadful and painful in this life: we are told of an abyss or furnace full of flames, a bottomless pit burning with fire and brimstone. The scripture mentions chains of darkness, an eternal night, and an hell-fire, where there are weeping and gnashing of teeth. It tells us, that "Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire, and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it," Isa. xxx, 33.

Fancy to yourselves a man devoured with worms, burning
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in hot flames, in continual torments, in whose wounds kindled brimstone is poured without intermission, with boiling lead, and burning pitch; if there be any other pains more sharp and grievous, fancy them also. All this will give us but a light and imperfect image of the state of hell; for all the pangs of the body are nothing in comparison to the horrors, troubles, and incredible griefs, that shall for ever rack and torture the damned souls.

As shame aggravates our sufferings, and renders them more terrible, the damned shall be loaded with shame and infamy to all eternity; their names shall be hateful to God and his holy angels, and they shall be cursed with an endless curse. And as it is an increase to our torment to suffer in the company of abominable varlets, and to become a companion of the most infamous rascals; they shall suffer with hell's executioner, and shall be sent to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels. All their senses shall share in these horrid torments; they shall be crushed in the wine-press of God's eternal wrath, and they shall feel for ever and ever the strokes of God's vengeance, and of his almighty hand. They shall then learn, by experience, what a terrible thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, and how insufferable that fire is that shall consume his enemies. Their eyes shall perceive nothing but the bottomless pit, the devil's image, and the furies of hell; their ears shall hear nothing but the horrible outcries and fearful roarings of tormented devils and damned souls. They shall be choaked with the noisome smell and fumes of the bottomless pit; they shall then drink the very dregs and bottom of God's anger and indignation, and they shall suck the venom of his arrows; fire and brimstone shall be the portion of their cup.

The sufferings of this life are but short, and for a moment, but the torments of the damned shall never end:

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"their worm dieth not, and their fire shall never be quenched," Mark ix. Rev. xx. They shall be tormented day and night to all eternity. When they shall have suffered as many thousand ages, as there be drops of water in the sea, or grains of sand on the shore, it shall be but the beginning of their grief. They shall live for ever, to die continually, and they shall die, and never be consumed. In the midst of these hot flames, they shall beg a drop of water to cool their tongue, Luke xvi. but we may say of the fire that shall torture the damned, what the spouse in the Canticle saith of the divine love that had inflamed her soul; "Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it," Cant. viii. And St. Paul tells us, that the things that God hath prepared for them that love him, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor did it ever enter into the heart of man, 1 Cor. ii. So, on the contrary, we may say, that those things that God hath prepared for them that hate him, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor did it ever enter into the heart of man. From hence shall proceed their rage, madness, and despair; they shall cry in Cain's language, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," Gen. iv. When they shall see nothing but an extreme misery and woeful darkness, they shall curse God the king of all creatures, Isa. viii. In their fury and rage they will eat their tongues, and blaspheme the great God of heaven and earth. It had been far better for such persons, that they had never been born; therefore they shall seek death, and shall not find it, Matt. xxvi. They shall desire to die, that is, to be reduced to nothing, Rev. ix. but this death shall fly from them: who of you can dwell in eternal flames? Rev. vi. If the phials and little cups full of God's wrath force the wicked to cry out, how much more shall the rivers and the ocean of God's vengeance draw from them, "O mountains, fall on us; O rocks, cover us, and hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the day of his wrath is come, and who may abide it?" But as they have stop-

ped their ears to God's 'gracious calls, and hardened their hearts to his invitations to repentance, God shall also stop his ear to their outcries, and his eyes to their grievous sufferings; and when they shall be overcome with fear and despair, God will scorn and mock at their insufferable misery.

CHAP. IV.

That Jesus Christ our Lord hath redeemed us from eternal death, and, by degrees, rescues us from a spiritual death.

WE read, in the fifth chapter of the Revelation of St. John, that he wept bitterly, because no being in heaven and earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the book sealed with seven seals that was in God's right-hand. At that instant one of the twenty-four elders spake to him, "Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals." Thus we have until now wept bitterly, because we could find nobody in the armies of Israel to encounter with that powerful monster, Death. But let us also wipe our tears, and take good courage, my beloved; for this same Lion of the tribe of Judah is appointed to fight with this dreadful enemy: our victorious and triumphant David, who had torn in pieces the infernal lion, bruised the ancient serpent's head, and "spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross," Col. ii. 15. It is he that has undertaken this glorious combat; it was for that purpose that he left for a while the throne of God the Father, and the company of his holy angels, 1 Sam. xvii. It was for that intent that he came into the camp and confusion of Israel. He has not borrowed the weapons and assistance of the world, Heb. ii. All that he has taken from us, is our frail nature. "But he hath armed himself with righteousness, as with a breast-plate, and hath put on the helmet of salvation. He hath
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clothed himself with vengeance as with a cloak ; he hath trodden the wine-press, and nobody hath assisted him," Isa. lix. lxiii. But his arm hath saved him, and his hand hath upheld him ; as David hath cut off Goliath's head with his own sword, Jesus Christ hath overcome Death by death. Like unto the strong Samson, he hath destroyed all the enemies of his glory by his death, 1 Sam. xvii. He hath overcome, in dying, him who had the empire of Death, that is, the devil, Heb. ii. and " hath delivered them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." Then was fulfilled this saying of Hosea, " O Death, I will be thy plague : O grave, I will be thy destruction," Hos. xiii. And that of Isaiah, " He will swallow up Death in victory, and the Lord will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth," Isa. xxv. 1 Tim. vi. This blessed Prince, King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, and dwelleth in inaccessible light, hath destroyed Death, and hath brought to light, life and immortality by the gospel, 1 Tim. i. " O Death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of Death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ; but thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv.

This great God and Saviour has perfectly redeemed us from eternal death, as he himself teaches us in the Gospel of St. John ; " He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life," ch. v. 24. " I am the living bread, which came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," ch. vi. 51. ver. 40. " Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead ; this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die," ch. viii. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my word, he shall

shall never taste of death. I am the resurrection and the life: he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die; and he that believeth in me, although he were dead yet shall he live," ch. xi. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection," Rev. xx. "The second death shall never have any power upon him." In a word, the gates of hell, that is to say, Death, cannot prejudice them who are settled upon Jesus Christ, the rock of eternity. This merciful Saviour hath also delivered us from the spiritual death, Eph. ii. "For we being dead in our trespasses and sins, he hath quickened us, and raised us up together unto newness of life," Col. ii. He hath carried our sins in his body upon the cross, that, he dying unto sin, we might live unto righteousness. We are buried with him in his death by baptism, that as Jesus Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of God the Father, we also should walk in newness of life, 1 Pet. ii. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Jesus Christ shall enlighten thee," Eph. v. For by his death he hath not only reconciled us to God the Father, Rom. vi. Col. i. but he hath also procured to us the Holy Spirit, that creates in us a new heart, and imprints the image of his holiness, Ezek. xxxvi. 2 Cor. v. He makes us become new creatures, and regenerates us by the incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. This is that which the scriptures name the first resurrection, Rev. xx. St. Peter was ravished in admiration at this great and wonderful benefit, and therefore he acknowledged it; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. i. God discovered to the prophet Ezekiel a field covered with dry bones, and commanded him to prophesy upon these bones, Ezek. xxxvii. At the prophet's command they began to draw near to one another; then the nerves began to appear, the flesh to grow, and to be covered
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with skin ; but there was no life, till God commanded the prophet to prophesy again, " Thus saith the Lord, Spirit, come from the four winds, blow upon these dead bodies, and let them rise from the dead." Then the Spirit entered into them, they began to revive, and they stood upon their legs. This is the lively and true image of the first resurrection ; for the Spirit of God, that blows whither it listeth, regenerates us by degrees, Job iii. and the new man is created in our hearts by little and little, as the child grows in the mother's womb.

When Joshua brought the children of Israel into the land of promise, he destroyed not all the Canaanites, Josh. xxiii. there remained some who became scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. Thus our true and spiritual Joshua, who hath let us into the kingdom of his grace, hath not altogether destroyed all our evil affections : some yet remain that are like prickles in our sides, and like swords that pierce through our souls. They yet render our life bitter and unpleasant : therefore we often desire Death to come and put a period to this conflict. Sin was in possession of us, as a strong man armed in an house, but Jesus Christ is entered into our souls, and become master : he hath therefore bound and chained sin, and hath nailed it to his cross. But this furious beast, though he hath received a mortal wound, and is ready to give up the last gasp, yet struggles and foams within us. Our blessed Saviour hath extinguished, with the real stream of his blood, the infernal flames of our cursed affections : but yet there remain in the ashes some sparkles of this devilish fire, that yet cause in us feverish fits. Only this merciful Redeemer, of his infinite goodness, has loosed us from the devil's chains ; but that we might have cause to be humble, to desire the increase of grace, and long for the arrival of his glory, he leaves about us some of the troublesome fetters : by his holy Spirit he files them off by degrees ; but one day he will take them away from us.

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At the voice of this Prince of life, that reaches to the very bottom of our hearts, we are risen from the sepulchre of our vices with our grave-clothes about us, as Lazarus when he came out of his tomb. We are like the ancient slaves, who were set at liberty; we bear upon our foreheads the visible marks of our ancient bondage; but one day our Lord Jesus Christ shall cover these marks of infamy and disgrace with an heavenly diadem. If you desire another image of our spiritual condition, fancy to yourselves a dead man cast into a foul pit or sink, unto whom life is restored in a moment; afterwards, by degrees he is washed and cleansed of that filth that covered his body. We were not only dead of a spiritual death, but we were also overwhelmed in an abyss of corruption and filth. The Son of God hath pulled us out of this abyss, and already restored us to life; but the dirt and putrefaction with which we are disfigured he washes away with the water of grace, Zech. xiii. "For there is a fountain open for sin in the house of David," Isa. iv. in which God has promised to wash away all the filth of the daughter of Zion, and all the blood of Jerusalem. And as it happened to the cruel king Adonibezek, when the tribe of Judah took him prisoner, he lost the thumbs of his hands and the great toes of his feet, but he suffered not death till he came to Jerusalem; thus our great God and Saviour, the prince of the tribe of Judah, hath cut off the strength and power of the old man, who tyrannized in our souls, and has deprived him of his venomous nails with which he wounded our hearts; he hath also given him a mortal wound, but he suffers him to enjoy a languishing life, and will not take away his last breath, until we bring him to the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

But to speak more openly; sin is yet in us, but it reigns not: for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has broken its sceptre, and pulled it from the throne; and as he hath taken
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from it all command in us, he constrains it to leave the possession of our souls by degrees. As a strong and mighty king who, having won the battle, pursues and drives the enemy, until he hath totally expelled them out of his kingdom; so doth our Saviour deal with sin.

And as it happens to a woman with child in her old age, there are in her body two contrary lives, that of the mother, and that of the child, the one decays and dies insensibly, the child's life grows and increases by degrees; so it is in the faithful and regenerate soul; there are two lives, that of sin, that the scripture names the old man; and that of the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness; the one diminishes and draws to its final end; but the other grows and gathers strength, until we arrive to the perfect stature of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Spirit of God every day gets ground of our corruption and weakness.

CHAP. V.

Why we are yet subject to the Corporal or Natural Death, and what advantage we thereby receive in Jesus Christ.

THE wise king teaches us, in the ninth of Ecclesiastes, that "the same accident happens to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the clean and to the polluted, to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not." These words are to be understood of the several afflictions unto which we are exposed during this mortal life; but we may apply them to the natural death: for "it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that judgment follows," Heb. ix. "By one man sin is entered into the world, and by sin Death; and thus Death is come upon all men, because they have all sinned," Rom. v. Therefore when Joshua felt himself

himself feeble and decaying, he told the children of Israel, "That he was going the way of all flesh," Josh. xxiii. And Job complains unto God, "I know that thou wilt reduce me to death, and to the house appointed for all living," Job xx. It was upon this subject that the royal prophet was exercising his meditation, when he cried out, "Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he free his soul from the power of the grave?" Psa. lxxxix. And to speak the language of Solomon, "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern:" that is to say, the back-bone, where marrow is as white as silver, be loosed; when the skull, which is like a precious vessel of gold, be broken; when the vena cava receives no more blood from the liver, the fountain of life; when the lights, which draw in and push forth the breath, move no more; or when the kidneys, which extract the humidity from the veins, and cause it to drop down into the bladder, as into a cistern, begin to fail; "then shall the body return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it."

To express to us this inevitable fate, Moses reckons all the ancient fathers who have lived longest in the first world: he mentions one who lived 700, others 800, others 890 years, and some near 1000, Gen. v. But when he had well spoken of their deeds, and of their children which they had left behind, he adds, in the conclusion of all,—and then such an one died. Thus our Creator executed upon all men the sentence once pronounced against Adam the father of all mankind, "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return."

By this means God declared his justice and truth, and accomplished what was signified by the ancient types, Lev. xiv. For according to the laws which God gave to Israel by Moses, the house that was infected with leprosy was to be demolished,

demolished, and cast into a noisome place. There is a more urgent cause for a man's body to be destroyed, and laid in the sepulchre, because he was created to be the palace of the living God, the dwelling of his glory ; but sin, a kind of infectious leprosy, hath insinuated itself, and disfigured it, hath entered the skin, corrupted the blood, disordered the spirits, crept into the joints and marrow, and hath spread its venom in such a manner that there is none of our members but is an instrument of iniquity and unrighteousness, Rom. vi. For the same reason, we cannot sufficiently admire the difference which God has put between the vessels that were clean, and such as were unclean ; for he commanded, that the earthen vessels infected should be broken in pieces, Lev. xi. but that such as were of a more valuable substance, should be only washed with water, and purified with fire, Numb. xi. The commands and laws of the great God are excellent commentaries upon his actions. Our soul is like a golden vessel, because it is a spiritual and heavenly substance, therefore God doth not altogether destroy it, although it be infected with sin, but causes it to be washed and cleansed at the fountain of his infinite mercy. He purifies it with the blood of his Son, and causes it to pass through the fire of his holy Spirit. But for this miserable body and earthly vessel and tabernacle, he breaks it to pieces, and reduces it to dust and ashes. It is my judgment, that Death is an excellent means to demonstrate the infinite power of our great God and Saviour : for the greater the disease is, the more admirable is the cure. Without doubt, the finger of God, in his infinite power, is far more visible in raising one man from the dead, than preserving many thousands alive.

As God is wont to enlighten our darkness, so he makes use of Death, to cause his infinite wisdom to shine and appear in all his creatures. Sin hath brought forth Death ; and Death, on the contrary, as a most fortunate parricide, kills and de-

stroys its parent, sin ; for it is Death that totally roots out of our souls all corrupt affections.

Moreover, God, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. will have all his children pass through the same path, to take possession of his eternal inheritance, and enter by the same gate into his royal palace. All the faithful in the Old Testament are gone already this way, "through many tribulations," Acts xxiv. They are arrived to the kingdom of God, and through Death they are come to the abode of life and immortality. The holy scriptures that are inspired of God tell us, that the Reubenites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, Num. xxxii. Josh. i. left their dwellings which they had beyond Jordan, to go over and fight in the army of Israel, and did not offer to return until God had given rest to their brethren, and put them into a peaceable possession of their inheritances. If I may make some stop at such an elegant allegory, I may say, that these passages represent to us a lively figure of the faithful who die before the end of the world: for they leave their bodies, the abode and dwelling of their souls, and pass through Death, as through another Jordan, into the celestial Canaan, to encounter with God by their prayers, in the society of the first-born, whose names are registered in heaven ; and they will not return again to their bodies, until the number of the saints be complete, until the building of the church be finished, and until our great Joshua has introduced us into his eternal rest, and put us in possession of the incorruptible inheritance reserved for us in heaven. Then we shall not need to fight, but to enjoy peaceably the fruits of our victories, and to rest for ever from our labours. We shall have no cause to offer to God prayers and supplications ; but our business shall be to sing unto him praises, and eternal thanksgivings.

The more considerable reason, in my judgment, of this

our destiny, is, that God has predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren ; he will have us to be baptized with his baptism, and drink of his cup, and enter into bliss by the same gate through which he has already passed. Through shame and disgrace he is arrived to glory ; and through death he is entered into life. He hath drunk of the bitter waters, before he tasted of the river of celestial joys ; and he went down into the grave, before he would mount up to the right hand of God.

Although it is appointed unto all men once to die, Heb. ix. 27. I dare affirm, that Death has no cause to triumph, because the chief advantage is not on that side. We read in the book of Esther, that king Ahasuerus would not recal the proclamation that he had sent forth against the Jews, but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves, to attack their enemies, and to make them suffer all the mischief they intended against them. I find something like unto this proceeding, for God would not call back the sentence of death pronounced against mankind in the garden of Eden ; nevertheless he allows us, nay, he commands his true Israel, to take up arms against Death, to conquer and trample it under feet.

In the first place Jesus Christ, our head, hath encountered with Death, and overcome it ; he hath pursued it unto its trenches, and baffled it in its own fortification ; Death thought to have devoured him, but it hath been devoured itself. As the fishes are taken by the hook that they think to swallow ; and as the bees hurt those whom they sting, but do greater harm to themselves, for they break their stings, and lose thereby their lives : thus Death, by fixing its sting in the humanity of Jesus Christ, hath put him to a great deal of pain for a time, but it has thereby lost all strength and vigour for ever.

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The men of Judah, to satisfy the enraged Philistines, delivered into their hands Samson bound with ropes. When they saw him, they gave several joyful shouts ; but the Spirit of God came upon him in such a manner, that he tore in pieces the two ropes wherewith he was bound, and overcame them by whom he was to be led away prisoner, and killed a thousand of them. Thus the miserable Jews, for fear of the Romans, delivered unto them our Lord Jesus Christ, their brother according to the flesh, bound like a malefactor. When hell saw him nailed to the cross, and afterwards laid in the grave, it did wonderfully rejoice the devil, and his angels began to sing songs of triumph. But it was altogether impossible, that the Prince of life should be detained in the prisons of Death. He hath not only broken out of the grave by his infinite power, but hath also trampled under feet all his most furious enemies, and overcome millions of infernal fiends. And to declare how life and death were in his power, he baffled Death, when he was, as it were, a prisoner, shut up in his dungeon. He hath broke open the gates of this black prison, and torn in pieces all its fetters : for when he was yet in the grave, he raised to life many that were dead, who were seen in the holy city ; and yet at present he holds in his hand the keys of death and hell. Therefore, as children rejoice at their father's victory, and as the subjects are concerned at the prosperous proceeding of their king, and as the members are the better for the glory and honour of their head ; thus we may justly glory in the most notable victories and famous triumphs of Jesus Christ, who is our father, king, and head. We may also justly glory, that we are lords of Death, and that we have overcome it in the person of our great God and Saviour. I say this after the apostle St. Paul, " that God hath quickened us together, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places with Jesus Christ," Eph. ii.

Moreover,

Moreover, as our Saviour hath once overcome Death for us, he continues to subdue it in and by us. He suffers us not to encounter with our enemies alone, nor leaves us in our agonies : but as in a day of battle, a wise and provident general has an eye to every place, and encourages, by his action and voice, his soldiers, whom he perceives at handy-blows with the enemy ; some he loads with praises, others with promises ; by those means he encourages such as behave themselves bravely, rescues the weak and feeble, and to such as are overborne he furnishes them with fresh supplies : thus deals with us our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the great God of hosts, who sits in the heavens in triumph, and beholds all our combats and encounters. When he perceives us too weak, that we might not be overcome by our dreadful enemies, he furnishes us with his Holy Spirit, and his own armour, as Jonathan did David, when he delivered to him his cloak, his bow, his belt, and sword. Besides, this merciful Saviour disarms Death of its most hurtful weapons, and takes away all its arrows and darts.

As the strength and power of Samson lodged in the hair of his head, which the Philistines could never have imagined ; so the strength and power of Death consists in such things as the world least dreams of. The most dreadful weapons with which it terrifies and beats us, are the thunderbolts and curses of the law ; and our sins are poison in which it dips its arrows, or rather our sins are fiery darts with which it wounds and destroys us. Now Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, when he became a curse for us, Gal. iii. He has carried our sins in his body upon the cross, 1 Pet. ii. and, as the he-goat Hazazel, has transported them away into an uninhabited desert, Lev. xvi. he has removed them from the eyes of our God, as far as the east is from the west ; he has cast them to the bottom of the ocean, and drowned them in his blood ; so that

we may now see fulfilled what was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah ; “ The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none ; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found,” chap. i.

Therefore being befriended with the grace of God, and armed with the virtue of his Holy Spirit, let us shew our courage, and defy Death ; let us look it in the face without fear, laugh at all its threats, and encounter it without dread : for it is now like an insolent soldier without weapons ; it is like a bee without its sting ; it is like an old lion that roars, but has lost all its claws ; it is like a snake that would convey its poison, but has no venomous teeth left, having been pulled out by him who has bruised the serpent’s head.

If you consider nothing but Death’s exterior, its face and fearful appearance, its frigid eyes, its meagre body, its iron hands ; you cannot perceive any difference between the death of God’s children, and that of the most wicked varlets. But if you lift up the mask, and examine the death of the one and of the other more exactly, you will meet with as great difference as betwixt heaven and earth, the paradise of God and hell : for as Moses’s brazen serpent, which he lifted up in the desert, had the form and appearance of a burning serpent, but nothing of the poison and fire ; thus the death of the faithful appears as the death of other men, but hath not the deadly and pernicious consequences ; for it is not only a sign and a testimony of God’s grace and favour, but the beginning of our deliverance, and the cure of all diseases. As Moses when he had cast wood into the waters of Marah, they had the same colour, but not the same bitterness and unpleasant taste : thus the death of God’s dearest children hath the same tincture and appearance as before ; but Christ’s cross hath taken away the danger, the trouble, and extracted out its distasteful bitterness, and changed it into unspeakable sweetness. As Pharaoh was drowned be-
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fore all his army in the waters of the Red Sea, but the children of Israel found a secure and pleasant passage into the promised land; when they were arrived upon the other shore of that dreadful sea, they sung unto God songs of triumph and thanksgiving: thus Death opens its jaws to devour the reprobates, it is an abyss where they can find no bottom: but unto the children of God it is a favourable passage into an eternal bliss; as soon as they are gone through, they are arrived at the place of assurance, joy, and rest, where God furnishes them with songs of triumph and thanksgiving to the Lamb, Rev. i. 15.

Balaam the prophet was called to curse the people of God, but he blessed them, contrary to the vain expectation of Balak, king of Moab. Thus Death hath been brought into the world by the devil, to destroy and utterly abolish the whole seed; but by God's infinite goodness and wisdom hath changed it into salvation and blessing. Let us therefore not be any longer puzzled to find out the meaning of Samson's riddle; "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," Judg. xiv. For the church of God, unto whom Christ hath discovered the most excellent secrets of his kingdom, teaches us to seek the sweetest comforts out of the belly of this old lion.

It is not possible to judge of music by a single note, or of an oration by a period, nor of a comedy by a scene. So we must not judge of a battle by the first assault, nor of a wrestling by the first embraces and efforts of the wrestlers: for some in the beginning of the battle turn their backs, who nevertheless at last often win the victory; and some in wrestling are foiled at the beginning, who nevertheless supplant their enemy, and cast him upon the ground. Therefore, that we may better understand the great and notable advantages we have over Death, we must examine it all along until the end of the encounter; we must take notice of every assault that we give to this irreconcilable enemy. As

As soon as the taper of our life begins to burn, Satan sends forth his blast to extinguish it. Death labours to undermine this poor dwelling from the first moment that it is built, besieges it, and on all sides makes its approaches; in time it saps the foundation, it batters us with several diseases and unexpected accidents; every day it opens a breach, and pulls out of this building some stones. But if Death labours to demolish on his part, we on ours labour to repair: and as those who built the walls of Jerusalem held with one hand the trowel, and with the other a sword to fight; so we defend ourselves, as well as we are able, against the assaults of Death. Therefore we do not only endeavour to preserve this earthly lodge that God hath let and set to us for a term, and to mend up the continual delapidations that happen in it: but at the very sight of Death, when it gives us the assault, we do then also advance our spiritual building, and labour to bring it to perfection. So that we may say, as the apostle St. Paul, "If our outward man decays, the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16.

To speak right, Death meddles with nothing but the exterior part of man: for our principal fort and chief bulwark hath no cause of fear to be undermined or sapped, nor to be won by assault; for it is raised above the heavens, and built upon the Rock of eternity. It cannot be battered: for as the thunder-bolts, the storms of hail and ill-weather, cannot prejudice the sun-beams, because they are of a spiritual nature; so all the fury of the world, and all the powers of hell, and the rage of Death, can never wrong the soul, that is of a spiritual and immortal nature: this castle can never be famished, for God furnishes it with manna from heaven; and from the rock upon which it is built there runs a source of living waters, that rises to everlasting life. In a word, as the serpents crawl only upon the dust, Death hath no power but upon the earthly part of man; therefore our
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Lord Jesus Christ advised his apostles, "not to fear the
that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul."

At the very instant of our soul's separation from the body
Death seems to have a great advantage upon us ; but when
I consider all, I find it hath no cause to boast of the victory
When a valiant captain marches out of a town almost destroyed,
to another more secured and better fortified, with
his weapons in his hand ; we say that he has quitted his station,
and not that he is overcome. Thus when the wretched body decays,
and that our souls depart well armed with
faith and hope, to lodge in a more secure place in the
highest heavens ; no body can say, to speak properly, that
we have been overcome. And as it happens to such
sail on the ocean, when a violent storm threatens them
with shipwreck, they think themselves very happy if they
can quit their vessel, leave it to the mercy of the winds and
waves, and escape to land with their riches and lives safe ;
thus it is with us who sail upon the tempestuous sea of
this world ; when Death raises its most cruel storms, we
think ourselves happy if we can leave this miserable body
which seems as a ship to our souls ; and if we can secure
our spiritual life and our heavenly riches. Therefore we
may justly say to the faithful, that are frightened when they
see Death threatening to drown them in its depths, as St
Paul to the ship's company, who trembled for fear at the
sight of the roaring and swelling waves, "Take good
courage, my brethren ; for I assure you, in the name of the
living God, that your lives are secure, and that you shall
lose nothing but the ship," Acts xxvii. We may furnish
them with stronger comforts ; for these good mariners leave
their ship without hopes of recovering it again, but we are
assured, that God will one day gather up every piece of the
broken vessels of our bodies, and will join them together
in a more perfect state.

Therefore Death doth not carry away our bodies by violence, but we leave them willingly ; we do not stay for its summons, but we do prevent Death, and give it a licence ; when we have packed up our bag and baggage, we are ready to depart out of this wretched abode, where we endure all manner of calamities ; for in this house defluxions fall down, vapours arise, the pillars and foundations tremble, the joints open, the windows are darkened, and the burning fevers, like violent fires, consume it.

I must not forget that the faithful name their death not only a removal of their lodging, but a removal from a tabernacle. This teaches us, that we must depart from hence with as much joy and readiness as a soldier doth out of his tabernacle at the end of a laborious and bloody warfare ; and with as much pleasure as the children of Israel did out of their camps, in which they had remained in the desert, to enter into the sweet and comfortable dwellings of the land of Canaan.

Not only the body is like to an hired horse, or to a tabernacle transported up and down ; but it is by sin become to our soul a woeful prison. Therefore death may be compared to the messengers sent by king Pharaoh, on purpose to take Joseph out of the dungeon, and bring him to his palace. The body that was created to be a noble pavilion of joy and honour, is become to our soul a wretched incommodious prison ; and death is like to the furnace of Babylon, that burnt and consumed the bands of the three children, without prejudicing their garments or attire, Dan. iii. For it destroys the natural bands that detain our souls enslaved to the earth, but meddles not with its ornaments, with its righteousness and sanctification. It is like the skin that incloses the child in its mother's womb, or like the shell where the chick is formed ; for of necessity it must be broken before we can enter into immortal life. In short, we may say

that the body, which was given to the soul for its palace, is become by sin its grave and loathsome sepulchre, far more noisome than that of Lazarus; and that death is like the voice that calls upon us, "Lazarus, come forth." Faithful souls, you see then, that as Samson carried away the gates of the city of Gaza, and transported them to the top of the hill, so hath Jesus Christ, our true Samson, transported and carried the gates of death to the highest pitch of glory; therefore, whereas before we looked upon it with horror as the entrance of hell, now we may behold it with confidence and joy, saying, as Jacob did of Bethel, "This is the gate of heaven."

Seeing, therefore, that this is the nature and condition of Death, I find that men give it too much advantage; for we should not offer to say, that such are dead, whom God hath admitted into eternal life; because the qualification should be derived from the chief and noblest part: as it is in nature, there is no generation without corruption; and we commonly say, that it is a generation, when the thing engendered is more excellent than the thing corrupted; on the contrary, that it is a corruption, when the thing corrupted excels the thing that is engendered. For this reason our change and removal out of this world should rather be styled a life than death: though our body dies and rots in the earth, our soul revives and mounts up to heaven; and this mortal life, which we leave with the world, is nothing in comparison of that life which we shall enjoy with Christ and his holy angels. God is named the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob: "Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living," Exod. iv. Matt. xxii.

I may also without any figure affirm, that death, in respect to the body, is no real death, but a kind of sleep; as it is said in the prophet Daniel, "Many sleep in the dust of the earth," ch. xii. And in Isaiah, that "the just sleep"

- their beds." Therefore our Saviour, speaking of Jairus's daughter, declared, "The child is not dead, but sleepeth," Matt. ix. And of Lazarus his friend, "Lazarus our friend sleepeth, and I go to awake him." Beloved, if thou art of the number of such as Christ loveth, thy death will be but a kind of sleep of a short continuance, and of a few days; the Lord will raise thee up again: "for the hour cometh, and is already, that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall revive," John v. During this life the assaults of Death are no better than light skirmishes; the most sensible and most dangerous blow that it strikes, in appearance, is when it separates the soul from the body; but the last and most final encounter, that will put an end to all disputes, will be at the day of judgment, when Jesus Christ will appear from heaven, with the host of all his immortal angels and saints, to encourage us to the encounter. He will come with the encouraging voice of an archangel, and the last trumpet shall sound. Then Death will endeavour to keep us still in its black prisons, and our bones will be found without life and motion; but the Spirit of God shall breathe upon these dry bones, and will cause them to revive. As when the prophet Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of a whale, God commanded the fish to vomit him up again upon the ground; thus, when we shall have made so long our abode in our graves as God hath appointed in his wisdom, Death shall be forced to restore all that it hath swallowed. And as Daniel came out of the lions' den by break of day, those savage beasts having done him no harm; thus, at the break of the last day, at the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, we shall all go out of Death's deep dens; and, as if God had sent an angel on purpose to shut the mouth of this old lion, we shall then find that it hath done us no harm. Instead of devouring us, it will prove a faithful keeper of our bones. The faithful then may speak to Death in the language of the prophet Micah,
- " Rejoice

" Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy ; when I shall fall, I shall rise : when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me," Micah vii. 8. As Moses said to Pharaoh, " We will go into the wilderness to sacrifice to our God ; we will go out of thine Egypt with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds ; there shall not a hoof be left behind," Exod.

3. Thus we, in an holy confidence, may talk with Death, ' Maugre thy rage and fury, we will go up to heaven to sacrifice to our God immortal praise ; we shall get out of thy fetters ; we, our wives our children, our brothers and sisters, our parents and friends, all the people of God, whom thou dost at present keep in a close restraint. Notwithstanding the infernal attempts of thine inhuman power, there shall not remain so much as an handful, no, not so much as the least grain of our ashes, behind us.'

When the Son of God shall appear in his glory, from heaven, he shall consume all Death's trophies and monuments with irresistible flames ; so that it shall happen to this imperious enemy of mankind, as it happened to the kings of the Amorites mentioned in the Israelitish history, Josh. x. 24. Joshua suffered them to live until he had returned from his victory ; and when he had perfectly overcome all his enemies, he commanded them to be brought forth, and gave orders to his captains to tread upon their necks ; and with his own sword he dispatched them, cast them into a cave, and caused great stones to be rolled at the entrance of it. Thus shall our true and celestial Joshua deal with Death ; he suffers it to reign while he is gone to pursue his enemies ; for the last enemy that shall be destroyed by him is Death. When he shall have perfectly pursued all other enemies, he will crown all his victories with a glorious end, and accomplish the church's triumph, by causing us to trample upon Death, that shall be cast into the bottomless pit, whereof the entrance shall be shut up for ever, Rev. x. Then shall be accomplished

accomplished this glorious prophecy, "Death is swallowed up in victory," 1 Cor. xv. For the Spirit of God assures us, in express terms, "That Death shall be no more."

By what we have said, it may easily appear what is become of the rope thrice twisted by the devil, with an intent to strangle therewith all mankind. The Son of God hath cut in pieces the first of these unhappy ties by an almighty power; by the Spirit of sanctification he loosens the second by degrees; and by the last he draws us to himself, and then he burns and consumes it altogether. Therefore we have no reason to fear an eternal death, nor to tremble when hell opens its wide jaws. If we resist the devil, he flees away from us, James iv. At last we shall trample him under our feet, Rom. xiv. It is true, that the sad and doleful effects of the spiritual death commonly draw out of us many a sad groan and tear, whilst our souls remain in this sinful flesh. We are already got out of the tombs of corruption and sin, but yet bear about us, as it were, our winding-sheet, and some odd reliques of our natural misery. But we have this consideration to comfort our drooping spirits, that Christ will shortly give the same order from heaven to us as he did for Lazarus, "Loose him, and let him go," John xi. So that instead of the corruption of our nature, that is so incommodious to us, he will invest us in a state of glory, incorruption, immortality, and perfect happiness. In relation to the natural death, we may justly say, that our Lord and Saviour hath freed us from all the fears that it might cause in us. So that it is my judgment, that we may not only affirm, that we have not the least apprehension of it, but we may expect it with confidence: for if we be truly of the number of the faithful, and God's adopted sons, we hope, desire, and rather hasten Death's arrival, by our most earnest and passionate wishes.

What I have already declared in this chapter might satisfy

tisfy any Christian soul, and furnish it with sufficient considerations to strengthen it against all apprehensions from Death. Now, as one who wants to buy stuffs in a shop, when he cheapens such as are slight and of small value, casts his eye only upon a piece or pattern; and by that judges of the rest; but when he intends to purchase a rich tapestry of great value, he desires to view and consider every part one after another, and make an estimation of the value and beauty of every corner; so I judge that the wise and religious reader will desire now, that as I have discovered to him, in gross, the body of *Consolations against the Fears of Death*, I should, in the next place, unfold the hidden excellencies, produce every part of them by degrees to his contemplation, and with my pen make him take notice of all the rarities.

CHAP. VI.

From whence proceed the Fears of Death.

AS a wise and discreet physician usually examines with care the causes of the disease, before he prescribes a remedy; and as an experienced surgeon searcheth the wound before he puts the plaster to it; thus I judge it necessary to seek with diligence from whence the Fears of Death proceed, before we shall appoint remedies to the faithful souls: for when we shall perfectly understand the nature of the disease, and its principal causes, we shall, without difficulty, be better able to assign a convenient remedy; when we shall have searched the wound, and washed it clean, we will, with God's assistance, pour into it the true balm of Gilead.

1. We have just reason to accuse ourselves of too much unmindfulness of death. We do not meditate so often as we should upon the misery and frailty of our poor decaying nature.

nature. We acknowledge it, I confess, with our tongues, that our life is but a breath in our nostrils, a vapour that soon disappears, a shadow that quickly vanishes away ; but in the mean time we flatter ourselves in our hearts with more pleasant thoughts and desires, as Herod, that merr should look upon us as so many little gods, Acts xii. We suffer ourselves to be deceived by the flattering insinuations of our corrupted flesh, and by the delusive suggestions of the old serpent, that whispers to us, as to our first parents, " You shall not die," Gen. iii.

2. We commonly affirm, that Death is inexorable ; nevertheless, for the most part, we live as if we had made an agreement with Death, and had secret intelligence with the grave, Isa. xxii. Death approaches with feet of wool, without noise ; we imagine, therefore, that it never will come near us ; as that wicked servant in the Gospel, Matt. xxiv. who concluded, from his master's delays of coming, that he would not come at all. We hate and abominate the sight of all things that represent unto us any appearance of Death, or that call to our minds its remembrance. If at any time its image come in our way, we turn from it our eyes, and banish out of our fancy all imaginations of it, as of a most odious and deceitful illusion. Death seizes upon us before we have well thought whether we be mortal or no. Therefore we are surprised and astonished at its approaches ; and we become like the foolish Israelites, who trembled and fled before Goliath, because they were not accustomed to behold him.

3. We depend too much upon second causes. We look upon death as a thing that happens by chance, or as an evil that may be prevented, or at least put away for a time ; whereas we should be fully persuaded, that God hath determined and appointed, not only death itself, but also all the causes and means by which it commonly happens. Therefore we are often filled with displeasure, and seduced to
murmur

murmur and repine against God. We grin and bite the stone, instead of adoring with all humility that wise hand that cast it. In a word, whenever Death comes to us, we are ready to say to it, as the devils to our Saviour, "Wherefore art thou come to torment us before the time?" Matt. viii.

4. We are too much tied to this earth; we are so united to the world, that we would willingly make here our abode for ever; and cannot abide to hear that Death will remove us. Our lusts have no bounds, and we often spend ourselves in the pursuance of these miserable advantages. When we draw nearest to the end of our life, and of our mortal race, it is then that many are most earnest to make large provisions of worldly vanities. We build stately dwellings, and sumptuous palaces, at the very moment when we should think of nothing but building our tomb, and repairing our winding-sheet. We have so violent a passion for all the enjoyments of this life, that to separate us from them is to pluck out our hearts, and to tear in pieces our tender bowels. When Death comes to our bed-side, and offers to pull us out, we are ready to say, as the sluggard in the Proverbs, "A little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the hands," ch. vi. When our divine Bridegroom knocks at our gates, we are scarce willing to abandon our delights, as the spouse in the Canticles. What I saith the worldling, must I leave my sumptuous palaces, my pleasant dwellings, and my delightful gardens? Must I relinquish all this rich tapestry, these precious moveables, and all these rare and exquisite ornaments, that enrich my parlours, chambers, and closets? Must this unmerciful Death divest me so soon of all offices and dignities, and hinder me from a full and peaceable enjoyment of all these riches and treasures? Must it ravish from me in an instant all my delights and satisfactions? Is there no remedy? but must I be plucked from the embraces of my beloved wife, from the sight of my dear children, and from the

sweet company of my friends? Must I receive no more the services of my domestics? When we are in this unprepared state, it is no wonder if Death is so terrible to us, and if it causes us to feel the sharpness of its sting: for as of Absalom, when he was hanged by the hair of the head in a tree of the forest, Joab took three darts, and stuck him through the heart; thus, when our affections are too much entangled with the world, and with the expectation of earthly contentments, it is then that they are miserably exposed to all the darts and violent attempts of Death.

5. Another principal cause of the fear of Death is a wicked life. We are plunged in the vices and debaucheries of the age. We suffer ourselves to be corrupted by ill company, and carried away with the torrent of vicious customs. It is therefore no wonder if Death fills our souls with apprehensions, because it comes to us armed with our sins, and is pressed by the remorse of conscience, and horror of our crimes. How comes it to pass that such a terrible astonishment fell upon king Belshazzar, when he saw the fingers of an hand writing upon the wall of his palace the sentence of his doom? Dan. v. It was because he had profaned the holy vessels of God's house, and was rioting in the company of lascivious women. Wherefore did Felix tremble when he heard St. Paul discourse of justice, temperance, and of judgment to come? Acts xxiv. It was, because he was a wicked varlet, given over to all manner of filthy and unjust living. Thus because we profane the members of our body, which are as the vessels of God's sanctuary; and because our lives are vicious and disorderly, we cannot abide to hear Death mentioned; and when it cometh to us, we are ready to speak to it in Felix's language to St. Paul, "Depart for this time." So that the love of sin and the fear of Death are as two sisters, who hold one another by the hands; or rather they are twins, that are born and die together. As the prophet

Amos said to the Israelites, "Ye put far the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near," Amos vi. so we may say of the men of this age, You put as far from you as you can the day of death, and draw near to all manner of impurity, covetousness, ambition, pride, vanity, usury, rapine, violence, envy, malice, and such like soul plagues. You do not only draw near to these abominable vices, but what is worse, you lodge them in your bowels, and harbour them in your hearts. Certainly we may well apply to all vicious persons what the prophet Jeremiah says of Jerusalem, "Her filthiness is in her skirts, she remembereth not her last end," Lam. i.

6. I have taken notice of another defect in us : We mistrust the providence of God, and know not how to repose ourselves upon his fatherly care. We have a too worthy esteem of ourselves, and of our own sufficiency. We cannot resolve to die, because we fancy ourselves very useful in the world, and that our death would be a considerable loss to the church of God, to the state, or to our family.

7. Because the soul and body are linked together in a very strict union, we cannot imagine how they can be separated without great and unspeakable convulsions. Our infidelity is so great, that we cannot rest satisfied upon the promises of God, who engages to succour us in our distress, and to deliver us from all our troubles, Isa. l. It is true, Jacob's ladder, that reaches from earth to heaven, may ravish us ; but it seems very uneasy to ascend : paradise is rich, glorious, and delightful to the uttermost ; but its gate is strait, and choaked up with thorns and briers.

8. I judge that one of the chief causes of the fear of Death is, because we look upon God as a most severe and merciless judge, inflamed with anger and fury against us, and armed with vengeance ; whereas we should consider and acknowledge

ledge him to be a merciful Father, full of compassion and kindness for mankind. Every slave trembles at the sight of his lord, and there is no malefactor but is afraid when he appears before his judge to be put to the rack; and can I, who am all spotted with sin, and blackened with crimes, can I appear before that glorious throne, that causes the seraphims to cover their faces with their wings? Isa. vi. How can I, that am but stubble, subsist in the presence of the God of vengeance, who is a consuming fire?" Heb. x.

9. There is another visible fault in us: We do not embrace, with a true and lively faith, the death and passion of our Lord and Saviour. We all speak of Jesus Christ crucified: but we do not know the divine virtue of his crucifixion, nor feel its efficacy. We do not consider, that his death hath broken down the partition that shuts us out of the heavenly sanctuary; and that his blood hath tracked us a way to paradise, and procured us an entrance into that place of eternal bliss.

10. Now, to prevent the horror of the grave, we do not consider as we ought, our Lord Jesus Christ in the tomb, and that he hath sanctified it with his holy and divine presence. We do not imprint in our imaginations, that it is just and reasonable that we should be conformable to Christ in his abasement, if we will have any share with him in glory and exaltation.

11. Besides, that which entertains in our souls the fear of Death, is this: We look upon it as if it were in its full strength and vigour; whereas we should remember, that Jesus Christ hath overcome and disarmed Death by his powerful resurrection; and that for our parts, we need but follow the footsteps of his glorious victories, and fasten that furious beast to his triumphant chariot.

12. We

12. We do not consider as we should, with a serious and religious application of mind, how our Saviour Christ is not only risen from the sepulchre victorious over Death, but that he is also ascended up into the highest heavens, as our fore-runner, to prepare a place for us, and that, by departing out of our miserable bodies, we follow the path of our ever blessed Saviour, to reap with him the fruits of his most glorious victories.

13. We stoop too much to consider our frail, corruptible, and mortal nature ; and we seldom enter into this most useful meditation, that by the Holy Ghost we are nearly and inseparably united to Jesus Christ, the Prince of life, and the source of light ; and that we have already in us the seeds of blessedness, of glory, and immortality.

14. As the children of Israel murmured against Moses in the desert, and wished to be again in Egypt, forgetting their bitter slavery, under which they had groaned, their painful labouring among the bricks, and the heat of their furnaces, and minding only the pleasure which they had lost, they dreamed of nothing but the plenty of bread and flesh, of the cucumbers, onions, and of the meats, with which they had so often filled their bellies : thus we repine at Death, because we do not dream of the evils from which it delivers us ; we think only upon the vain pleasures, and seeming advantages, of which it robs us.

15. We imagine that Death destroys and reduces us to nothing ; and we do not consider, that it never meddles with the principal part of our being, but only pulls us from sin, and breaks the rest of the chains of our spiritual bondage ; so that Death is rather the death of sin, than of the faithful.

16. Here is another great fault in us : We do not lift up
our

our minds to consider the glory prepared for us at the egress of our souls out of our mortal bodies. However we may demean ourselves, and whatever we may pretend, we do not firmly, without doubting, believe the felicities which God promises to us in the contemplation of his face. Sometimes we may think upon the joys of paradise; but it is a thought that passes through our souls with too much speed, and does not take any root. So that many, if they were not ashamed, would be ready to speak in the emperor Adrian's language, "My little soul, my dearest darling, O guest and companion of my body, whither art thou going?"

17. To these former causes of the fears of Death in us, we may add another: That we suffer our eyes to dwell too much upon the rottenness and corruption that threatens our body; whereas we should carry our eye-sight to behold its glorious resurrection, that shall soon follow. Pleasant abode, and delightful companion of my soul, must Death, this cruel Death, separate it from thee with so much violence? Must thou part with thy dear and sweet companion? Must my soul leave thee upon such grievous and lamentable terms, that of so many honours which have been heaped upon thee, thou shalt not carry so much as their shadow to the grave? that of so many rich moveables and treasures, thou shalt bear away nothing but a winding-sheet, a few boards, or, at the most, some pounds of lead? After thou hast lived in so much splendour and magnificence, must thy covering be at last the worms? After thou hast walked so proudly in palaces gilded with gold, and perfumed, must at last thy confinement be in a stinking and loathsome sepulchre? Must these beautiful eyes be closed? these lips of coral become pale? this golden mouth be stoped? and must this dainty flesh rot, and become odious to the eyes of the world?

18. In the next place, we do not meditate as we ought upon

upon that eternal bliss and glory that hath been prepared for us from the foundation of the world, and into which we shall enter when Christ Jesus shall come from heaven with his holy angels, to judge both the quick and the dead : when he shall re-unite our souls and bodies together for all eternity, that “ he may be glorified in his saints, and wonderful in all the faithful.”

CHAP. VII.

The first Remedy against the Fears of Death is, to meditate often upon it.

WE become acquainted with the most dreadful things by custom and conversation. Fresh soldiers commonly quiver and shake at the sight of an enemy ; they tremble at the volleys of shot, and, half-dead, fall to the ground at the terrible noise of the great ordnance. But when their courage hath been hardened by a long exercise, they can then without fear seek the enemy in his greatest advantages, and can go as merrily to the combat as to a feast or a triumph. The showers of small shot, the lightning and thunder of the cannon, cannot make them so much as shut their eyes or stoop their heads ; they then laugh at their former apprehensions. Thus the first conceits of Death commonly terrify us : but when we seriously meditate upon it, and look it in the face, we shall not only condemn it, but we shall seek it boldly in its retreats, and with an undaunted countenance, we shall behold Death let fly all its arrows, and casting its thunderbolts, without the least apprehensions. As they who are not wont to see savage beasts dare not draw near to them, and can scarce look upon them without fear ; but such as are familiarly acquainted with them can touch them without apprehension, and freely play with them : thus it is with them
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who never had any confidence to look Death in the face ; they tremble, and are filled with astonishment, as soon as they see its approaches ; but they who often behold Death are familiarly acquainted with it, and therefore they can with confidence thrust their fists into its jaws. Moses fled away from his rod, when it was first turned into a serpent ; but when he began to take it in his hand, and saw that it returned to its former shape and being, he was far from running from it, or entertaining the least apprehension of it : he made a very happy use of it, and by God's command wrought many miracles. Thus it is with Death ; it frights us at first, but if we can but take hold of it with hands of a true and lively faith, it will be so far from scaring or frightening us, that it will discover to us a world of delightful wonders.

Death therefore is so far from terrifying such as are accustomed to it, that it fills them with comfort and joy. As a child, that looks upon the father who hath a vizard on his face, is frightened and begins to cry ; but if he hath but the confidence to pull off the vizard, and take but notice of the loving smiles of his parent hid under that deformity, he will not only cease from weeping, and settle his mind, but he will also leap for joy, and embrace him. Thus, if we look upon Death with a timorous countenance, and behold its hideous appearance, we shall be struck with a sudden horror ; but if we can with any assurance lift up his vizard, we shall soon discover our heavenly Father, and with tears of joy we shall run to embrace him. As the apostles, when they espied Jesus Christ in the night walking upon the waves of the sea, cried out in a fright, thinking that it had been a spirit ; but when he drew near to them, and they heard his voice, they perceived him to be their Saviour ; when therefore they had received him into their ship, the storm ceased immediately. Thus, if we look upon Death at a distance, the blindness and ignorance with which we are possessed will represent to us a
frightful

frightful spirit ; but if we examine and behold it nearer, by the help of the gospel light, we shall find it to be our salvation, and the accomplishing of our redemption. All our fears will then be calmed, and our souls will return to their former temper. In a word, as he that runs from his enemy increases his courage, and renders him more earnest and resolved to pursue him ; thus, when Death sees us tremble, and decline its approaches, it becomes more proud and imperious over us. We must therefore think betimes of Death, represent it to ourselves continually, and enter into an acquaintance with it. It was holy Job's practice : for he "cried unto the pit, Thou art my father ; and to corruption and worms, Ye are my mother and my sisters," Job xvii. And I imagine that this was the chief reason of Philip of Macedon's commanding a page every morning to rouse him out of his sleep with, "O king, remember thou art a mortal man." For by this often-repeated lesson he laboured to humble his lofty mind, and teach his frail nature not to glory so much in the splendour of his crown and sceptre, nor to abuse the power committed to his trust. By this means also he became acquainted with Death, that it might not seem strange when it should come in earnest and snatch him away. This was also the design of the emperor Meruan, or Meruanes, who caused this motto to be engraved on his seal, "Remember that thou must die." These words minded him of that which his courtiers were afraid to mention to him. So that this great prince never confirmed with his seal the death of any man, but at the same time he represented to himself, that his own death was not to be avoided. For the same reason the noblemen of China are wont to have their coffins ready made in their chambers, that at every moment they might look Death in the face. And for that intent the Egyptians, in their most sumptuous feasts, commonly placed a dead man's skull in an eminent corner of the room. By this spectacle they intended not only to oblige their guests to moderate their

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joys,

joys, and to restrain their unruly lusts, but also to bring them acquainted with, and to accustom them to behold Death, amongst all their delights. They treated it as if their design had been to invite it to their most delicious feast, that they might rejoice together with it, John xvi. I conceive that the Jews for the same cause built their sepulchres in their gardens of pleasure, that they also might have the image of Death continually before them, and that in the midst of all their divertisements, it might be their most pleasant and ordinary entertainment. For us Christians, to oblige us to think upon Death, there is no need that a page should remember us every day that we are mortal, nor that the motto of a ring should call to our mind that we must die ; there is no need of a coffin to be placed in our chambers ; in such things there is many times more ostentation than piety : nor is it needful that a dead man's skull be put before our eyes, or a sepulchre be built or hewn in our gardens and places of recreation and delight : for as Alexander the Great understood that he was a mortal by the blood that ran out of his wounds ; thus the diseases unto which we are subject, and the daily infirmities that we feel, sufficiently instruct and assure us that we are mortals : and as a famous philosopher, when he received the unhappy news of his son's untimely death, answered the messenger with a settled countenance, "I knew," said he, "that I begat him a mortal man." Zenoph. Thus will the faithful say, without change of countenance, or appearance of fear, when his death is declared to him, I knew that my mother had conceived me a mortal man ; I knew very well that death is the tribute that we must pay to nature, and that upon this condition I am entered into the world.

If we will make use of any exterior help to imprint this lesson into our fancy, we must practise with care the advice of the wise man ; "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to that of feasting," Eccles. vii. "for that is the end of

all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.* Never look upon a diseased body stretched upon a bed, or upon a dead corpse in a coffin, but remember that this is an universal law, unto which all mankind must pay obedience; that it is the broad road of all the earth, and that there thou mayest behold the lively image of thy future state. I conceive this may be a good expedient, and very successful, to entertain in our minds the continual thoughts of death, to make our last will betimes, and frequently to peruse it: for as, when we meditate upon a farewell that we are to take of our friends, we feel in our souls the same affections and motions as are in us at the moment of our separation; thus will it be with us when we seriously meditate upon the last farewell that we are to bid to the world. Death will seem to appear upon our lips, or rather we shall think ourselves already in the sweet embraces of the divine Jesus, our glorious Redeemer.

Besides those things that are extraordinary, I find nothing in or out of us, nothing that we feel, taste, or relish; in short, nothing that passeth either in our private or public conversation, but is able to recal to our minds the serious consideration of death. The flesh that thou dost eat, the wool that clothes thy nakedness, the silk that adorns thy body, in general all thy garments and ornaments, are but the spoils of the dead creatures. The sight therefore of all these things must call to remembrance thy frail and mortal state, and cause thee to meditate upon the Preacher's saying; "The same accident that happens to the beast, the same happens to mankind; as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other. They have all the same breath, and man hath no advantage over a beast: for all is vanity, all go to the same place, all proceed from dust, and shall return to dust again."

Never pull off thy clothes, but remember that thou must shortly quit this miserable body, and lay it down in the
grave.

grave. When thou art entering into thy bed, think upon the sepulchre where thou must one day be stretched. If thou dost awake in the night, consider that Death will shortly come, and put out the taper of thy life. Let thy sleep be the image of thy death, and let it call to thy mind how thou must, within a few days, sleep in a bed of dust. When thou awakest, think upon the delightful sound of the archangel's trumpet, that shall rouse thee out of Death's long sleep.—Say within thyself, when thou arisest, It may be, that I shall never rise again till the Son of God shall come from heaven to lift me out of the grave with his almighty hand. When we cast our eyes upon the rising sun, let us say within ourselves, It may be, I shall never behold any other sun arise again, but the Sun of Righteousness, that carrieth healing under his wings. Consider when thou putteth on thy garments, that the time is coming when thou must be clothed with a more magnificent and glorious robe, a robe of light and immortality. When thou sittest down to eat, think upon the hour that is drawing near, in which Death will feed upon thy carcase; imagine that it may be, that this is the last time that thou shalt sit at the table; that next thou mayest sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the blessed martyrs, who have washed and whitened their robes in the blood of the Lamb; and that it may be, that thou shalt never taste, any more, but of the food of angels, and of the fruit of the tree of life; and that thou shalt never drink, but of the new wine in the kingdom of heaven, and of the rivers of eternal pleasures that run from the throne of God.

Every night that thou goest out of thy dwelling, or chan-
gest thy abode, fancy to thyself, that in a little time thou
must depart out of this mortal tabernacle. Art thou alone,
and separated from human society? Remember that within
a few days Death will separate and divide thee. Art thou
going to any meeting, or entering into any company, or
marching

marching to the holy assemblies? Discourse with thyself in this manner: It may be, that I shall never go into any other company, until I come to the church and congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Art thou invited to the marriage of a friend? Say unto thy soul, It may be, I shall never go to any other feast, but to the marriage of the Lamb offered from the foundation of the world. Dost thou see a rich and glorious palace, or a pleasant garden? Say to thyself, It may be I shall never see any other palace, but that where the living God dwells; and that it may be, I shall never behold any other place of pleasure, but the celestial paradise.

If thou castest down thine eyes to look upon the earth upon which thou treadest, consider at the sametime, that this earth, or something like to it, shall afford thee a grave, and that thou shalt sleep there the sleep of death. Remember what God told Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," Gen. iii. Or say with the holy man Job, "Remember, I pray thee, that thou hast formed me of clay, and that thou shalt reduce me to dust; I shall sleep in the dust, and if thou seekest for me in the morning, I shall be no more," Job vii.

If thou takest a view of the plants, of the herbs, and flowers, do not forget what the word of God speaks concerning our life, in the xcth Psalm, that, "man is like the grass which groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth, and is green; in the evening it is cut down and withered." And in the ciiid Psalm, "As for man, his days are as grass; as the flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." And elsewhere, "All flesh is like grass, and the glory of man like the flower of the field," Isa. xl. 1 Pet. i.

If thou takest notice of the shadow of the needle in a dial, that follows the swift motion of the sun, or of the shadows

adows which solid bodies cast upon the earth ; in the evening they stretch a great way, and a little after vanish : consider seriously, and engrave in thy mind this excellent sentence ; “ Man is like vanity, his days are as a shadow that passeth away,” *Psa. cxliv.* and say, as David, “ **I am gone as a shadow when it declineth,”** *Psa. cix.*

If thou hearest the whistling of the winds, which God taketh out of the storehouses, lift up thy soul unto God thy Creator, and say with Job, chap. vii. “ Remember that my life is but a wind, mine eye shall see no more good ;” that is, the imaginary good of this miserable world. And elsewhere, “ Thou liftest me up to the wind, thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance,” *chap. xxx.*

If thou lookest upon the glory and beauty of the heavens, and beholdest the ravishing sight of the stars, consider that thy gracious God hath formed thee after his image : not to continue always among this slimy and miserable earth, but to dwell with him for ever in the heavens ; and that at the end of the race he will raise and carry thee into the palace of his glory, where thou shalt shine as the sun in the greatest splendour.

If thou dost meditate upon the changeableness of the seasons, remember that the spring of thy infancy, the hot summer of thy youth, the autumn of thy maturity, and sadcountenanced winter of thy cold and decrepit age, shall succeed one another in the same order.

Let him who travels by land, think upon Job’s complaint, “ My days have been swifter than a post, they flee away, they see no good,” *Job ix.* Let him call to mind the apostle’s excellent saying, “ **This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those**

those things which are before, I press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God through Christ Jesus," Phil. iii. 13.

Let him who sails upon the sea, fancy the whole world is a great sea, swelling with waves, our life as a dangerous voyage, and our days as ships that pass away in a moment; and let him consider, that the last wind of Death will drive him into the haven of eternal felicity, to the enjoyments of immortal glory, Job ix.

Doth God bless us with children? Let us understand that we are minded by them of our mortality, for they come to take our room, and to succeed in our estate. Doth God take them away to his rest of whom we are most fond? Let this advertise us, that God intends thereby to cut off all the lower roots that tie us to this earth, to unloose our hearts and affections, that we may offer them up to him alone. Instead of spending our lives in tears, and indulging our foolish humours in needless displeasures, let us comfort ourselves with this consideration, That, by this means, a part of ourselves is entered into heaven, and that the other part will follow apace. Let us say with David, "We shall go to them, but they shall not return to us."

Let the magistrate, whenever he delivers his vote, or pronounces a sentence, be provided with this consideration, That he who sits in a judgment-seat here below, shall stand at the bar, and be judged himself above; that one day he shall appear as a poor prisoner at the tribunal of his great God; that the books will be opened, and that the universal Judge of the world will pursue every particular of his accusation; that he must render an account, not only of his words and actions, but also of his most secret thoughts; and that without examination at the rack, God will discover the very secrets of his heart.

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Let the gentleman, whenever he receives his rents and revenues, call to mind the tribute he must needs pay to Death. Let the prince and the lord, when he handles his royal patents, and his ancient charters, or when he examines the homage and duties to be paid to his house and family, take notice that he must go in person to heaven's gates, and pay his homage to the Divinity. Let the king who sits in his seat of justice, or chair of state, think upon the throne of the King of kings, before which he must appear, as well as the most wretched slave, and the meanest of his subjects; and that he must be accountable to a just God, who is no respecter of persons.

Let the minister never be employed about the duties of his function, but let him long and wish for that happy day, in which the Lamb shall instruct and feed him in person, and lead him to the fountain of living water.

Let the Christian soldier engrave upon his sword this sentence of Job, "Is there not as it were a warfare appointed for all mortals upon earth?" Job vii. And, instead of thirsting after human blood, let him prepare to encounter Death itself.

Let the husbandman, whenever he sows his seed, or when he reaps the corn of his fields, be mindful of the season that comes on apace, in which his body must rot in the earth, that it may grow up to eternity. Let him meditate upon what St. Paul saith, "O fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," 1 Cor. xv. And let him meditate upon David's comfortable persuasion, "They who sow in tears, shall reap with songs of triumph."

Let any handicrafts-man, that works in his shop, imprint in his mind this excellent sentence, "Our days are like the days of an hireling;" and when he hath ended his task, and

in departing to his rest, let him comfort himself with this assurance, that as soon as he shall have ended that work that God hath given him to do, he shall rest from all his labours, Job vii.

Whenever the physician visits the patient, or when the surgeon dresses the wounds, let them consider that they have no secret or art able to protect them from death, or to cure the breaches that it makes in our corruptible nature.

Let the most cunning lawyers, the most advised counsellors, and the most eloquent orators, remember, that all their rhetoric and subtlety will never obtain for them their suit against Death, nor procure a moment of respite or delay.

And let the most learned philosophers learn, that the soundest philosophy is the meditation of death.

In short, whatever be our employment, condition, or age, let us lift up our minds and hands unto God, to speak to him in the language of the prophet David, "Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days, that I may know how long I am to live;" or of Moses, "So teach us the number of our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."



A PRAYER and MEDITATION on our Mortality.

O MY God, and heavenly Father, since it is thy pleasure that I should be mortal, and that my body should return to the dust; grant me grace to be always mindful of my frail condition, and seriously to reflect upon the several changes of times, the variety of seasons, the inconstancy of the world, and alterations I meet with, as mementos of my last change

change and departure. Let my infirmities and frequent distempers be looked upon as so many messengers sent to summon and warn me, that I must shortly leave this tabernacle. Let the bed I rest on call to my mind, that when all the business of my life shall be finished, I must lie down and rest in a bed of dust. Let the garments that I cast off at night, the sleep that benumbs my senses, the tombs of my predecessors, forefathers, and friends, refresh in me the thoughts of my departure to my last home. Gracious God, give me grace so often to look upon Death and the grave, that I may be acquainted with them, and that they may not fright or terrify, but comfort me; for though I know that I am born to die, I know also this, that Death shall introduce me into the presence of my God, the only author of life and happiness, to live for ever with him in bliss. Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

The second Remedy against the Fears of Death is, to expect it every moment.

IT is not sufficient to think often upon Death, and to discourse of it in a pathetic manner; and there be some that frequently mention Death with many pious reflections; yet nevertheless they cannot boast of being free from all apprehensions of it. Their tongue is always ready to speak of Death, but their heart cannot yet yield to expect it. They know that Death will seize upon them, but they entertain this dangerous opinion, that the time is not yet come; they acknowledge that they are indebted to God and nature, but they delay the payment of the debt from day to day, as if they were able to corrupt the serjeants of Death, and obtain a reprieve at their pleasure. There is no man old and decrepit, but flatters himself with the fancy of having as yet at

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least a year to live in the world. In short, we imagine always that we perceive Death at a vast distance from us, and that we shall, at our leisure, prepare ourselves to receive it as we ought. Therefore, whenever or wherever it comes to drag us out of the world, it surpriseth and astonisheth us.

To prevent this mischief, we must not only consider that we are mortal, but that our life is short, and of no long continuance ; we must continually say with Job, " Are not my days few ?" Job x. and imprint in our minds this sentence of David's, " The Lord hath made my days as an hand-breadth, mine age is as nothing before him," Psa. xxxix. Or that of Moses, " The best of our days are but labour and sorrow ; for they are soon cut off, and we flee away," Psa. xc.

The ancients painted Time with wings, to express its unavoidable swiftness. The Holy Spirit compares our life to a weaver's shuttle, to an hired servant, to a post that runs apace, to a packet-boat, or an eagle that flies after his prey. The sacred writers speak of our life as a torrent of waters, of a cloud, of a vapour, a wind, or a breath. They tell us that our days are gone as a dream, they flee away as a shadow, they vanish as a word in the air, and that they perish as a thought. In a word, all the lightest and the most unconstant things in the world, whereof the motion is very sudden and quick, are employed, in holy scripture, to express the vanity of our life, and the shortness of our days.

Besides that our life is of a short continuance, it slides away insensibly, like a clock ; the wheels move without ceasing, although the hand appears to us to be steady ; or to a plant that grows continually, although the increase and growth is not to be discerned by our eye-sight ; or like to a man who stands in a ship under sail, he goes forward whether he will or no. Thus, whether we sleep or wake, whether we go
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or lie down, whether we eat or fast, whether we work or rest, we proceed on continually forward towards our graves. Our body is like to a tree eaten continually by worms; for day and night they feed upon it without intermission. In vain do you banish out of your minds the thoughts of Death; if ye will not call it to your remembrance, it will not fail to mind and remember you. The more you fly from it, the more it follows and pursues you at the heels; and when you imagine Death to be farthest off from you, it is the nearest to you.

As the cancer when it infects and enters into the breast devours the flesh without interruption, so time consumes and devours us continually. The meat that we swallow, and nourishes us, brings us by degrees into the embraces of Death, as the oil that causeth a lamp to burn, brings it to its end; or as when a torch is lighted it begins to decay, as soon as it begins to burn: this I may say without mistake, that the very first moment of this animal life is the first moment of our death: and as we say of all sublunary bodies, that the generation of the one is the destruction of the other; so it is with time, the birth of one hour, of a day, of a week, of a month, of a year, is the end of that which precedes. It is like a wheel, that mounts to no other end but to fall down again.

Since therefore our life is nothing else but a continued death, in proper terms, we are mistaken to name only the moment of the separation of the soul and body the hour of death: for as, when many cannon-shot are discharged against a castle to open a breach, we do not say that the last hath done the work; or as, when a hard stone is cut with a chisel and hammer, or insensibly carved and undermined with water, the last blow or drop don't carry away alone the glory of the performance; thus, when our bodies decay and crum-

ble away to dust, we must not only consider the last strugglings against Death, or the last attempt of this enemy. Of a ladder, where we ascend and descend, we view every step from the top to the bottom ; of an hour-glass we look to every grain of sand ; of a journey we reckon the first league as well as the last ; and in a race, we take notice of the first step that we go out, as well as that when we stopped : thus we must reckon our death to begin from the first moment that we drew our breath, until the last when we yield up the ghost.

Besides what happens every moment to this poor and despicable nature, an infinite number of strange, unlucky, and unexpected accidents, stop and shorten our race. The taper is not always consumed by its own flame ; many unkind blasts and showers extinguish it. If our life is short, it is no less weak and uncertain. The body in which we lead a languishing life is like Jonah's gourd ; for if it be but moved with a contrary and unwholesome wind, or touched by an unhappy worm, it withers upon a sudden, Jonah iv. This was the thought of Eliphaz, when he said, " We dwell in houses of clay, our foundation is in the dust, we are crushed before the moth," Job iv. When God intends to destroy mankind in his wrath, and kill multitudes in his displeasure, he doth not always commission an angel as his agent, as in the case of the first-born of Egypt ; as when he stretched forth the sword of his vengeance upon Jerusalem, and as when he cut off Sennacherib's army in one night, one hundred fourscore and five thousand men. He doth not always let loose the wicked spirits, as when he gave them leave to raise a furious tempest, which cast to the ground the house where Job's children were buried in the ruins, Job i. He opens not always the fountains of heaven, as when he washed away the first wicked world with a fearful deluge, Gen. vii. He causeth not always fire and brimstone to rain from heaven, as upon Sodom and Gomorrah, upon Admah and Zeboiim. He
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works not always miracles in the waters, as when he drowned Pharaoh and his Egyptian host in the waters of the Red Sea. He prepares not always whales to devour us, as he did Jonah. He sends not always burning serpents, as to the murmuring generation of the Israelites in the deserts. He commands not always the earth to open and swallow us up, as he did Corah, Dathan, and Abiram. He sends not always from above great hailstones, as when he knocked down the Amorites; he destroys not always by flames, that proceed from his presence, as he did Nadab and Abihu, who offered unhallowed fire upon his altar. He commands not always the lions and bears of the forest to issue out and devour us, as he did when the rebellious prophet was killed, and when the ill-tutored children of Bethel mocked Elisha. In short, God employs not always the plagues and judgments of pestilence, of war, and of famine; the unpleasant smell of a fuming snuff, a flying vapour of a malignant smoke, is able to choke us, or kill us in a moment; a fly, the kernel of an apple, the hair of the head, or the seed of a grape, or ashes, or sand, or some other atom, may stop the breath of our life. Therefore God adviseth us by the prophet Isaiah, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa: ii.

It is to be considered, that these contingencies happen very frequently, and in every place Death lays for us his snares, as well in the bosom of our tender-hearted parents, and in the embraces of our dearest friends, as amongst our most mortal enemies. Its invisible darts fly every where, and, as the psalmist informs us, "The pestilence walketh in darkness, and destruction wasteth at noon-day," *Psa. xci.* Death is busy on the solemn festivals as well as on the working-days, it drags us as easily from the table where we take our delights, as from the bed of sorrow, where we sigh and groan. There is no secret retreat where we may find a refuge; it
hath

bath no more regard of the temples dedicated to God's service than of the common houses. All the riches of America, and the power of the greatest monarch, are not able to protect us from its pursuits; it requires a present payment of the debts that we owe, and it is not possible to appear by deputy at the summons that it sends to us.

Death claps the summons on the posts of the door, it trusts them not in the hands of the messengers or lacquies; there is no warning, but it may write down upon it these words, "speaking to him in prison." It surprises us at home and abroad, in our closets and in the streets, in our beds, in our sedans, in the midst of our feasts and all our pomps. It offers violence to the sacred persons of the greatest kings in their most sumptuous palaces, in their most flourishing cities, in their strongest fortifications, in the midst of their most faithful subjects, and most victorious armies; upon their thrones, and in their triumphant chariots. As king Ahab, when he was going to take possession of Naboth's vineyard, told the prophet Elijah in a rage, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" 1 Kings xxi. Thus when the profane worldlings dream of nothing but the pleasant enjoyment of their unjust possessions, and swimming in the blood and sweat of the meaner people, they meet unexpected Death, which they curse in their hearts; and if it did not stop their mouths, they would say also in a rage, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?"

This holy meditation caused the best king upon earth to tell us, "Man knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them," Eccles. ix. This same consideration caused this excellent sentence to be written in the book of Job, "In a moment they shall die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away, and the mighty shall

shall be taken without hand," Job xxxiv. that is, that to destroy kingdoms and whole nations, and to carry away the most lusty and mighty men, Death has no need of any other assistance but his own arm.

Do you desire, Christian reader, to understand the result of this discourse? Let me tell you, that since death is certain, and not to be avoided, and that there is nothing so uncertain as the hour of its arrival, we ought so to live, as if we were to breathe forth the last gasp at every moment. We should behave ourselves as if we had always our souls upon our lips, ready to yield them into the hands of our great Creator, and to speak in Job's language, "Having our flesh between our teeth, and our souls in our hands," Job xiii. In regard we know not at what time nor in what place Death intends to come upon us, let us expect it at every moment, and in every place; and as we lodge in this earthly tabernacle, without any term prefixed, let us be ready to depart at the first warning: for it will be far better for us to go out willingly, than to be dragged out against our will. It is not convenient that Death should carry us away in the same manner as the sea beats and tosses a dead corpse upon its waves: but we must on this occasion imitate the discreet mariner, that trims his sails, and helps by his art the winds and the tide to carry him to his desired haven. We should not follow Death as the malefactor follows the executioner who drags him to suffer; but as the child follows his father, who conducts him to a feast. We should not engage in a combat with Death by constraint, as the ancient slaves with the wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatres; but we should imitate David's courage, who of his own accord marched out of the camp of Israel to fight with Goliath: it is better for us to attack and seize upon Death, than to be surprised and devoured by it unawares.

Come when thou wilt, O Death! thou shalt never surprise

prise me; for I wait for thee at every moment with my weapons ready in my hand. Thou shalt never drag me forcibly; for I will follow thee willingly and joyfully. Though thou art my enemy, yet will I speak to thee in the language of the spouse in the Canticles to her beloved, "Draw me, and I will run after thee." Nay, I will meet thee in the way, and receive thee with hearty embraces; for instead of dreading thy coming, I desire it passionately, and hope for it; for at the first arrival, as soon as I have seen thee, I shall overcome thee. O blessed and happy day, that promiseth me such a glorious victory, and such an eternal triumph.



A PRAYER and MEDITATION upon the continual Expectation of Death.

O GRACIOUS God, in whose power alone, and at whose pleasure, are the times and seasons; I know it is appointed for all men once to die, and that the grave is the dwelling which thou hast prepared to receive all mankind. We understand sufficiently by the experience of former ages, that none is able to say, "I shall live, and shall not see death." Thou, O Almighty God, our supreme judge, hast pronounced our irrevocable sentence in the earthly paradise, that we must die; so that I should be guilty of the greatest folly, if I did not firmly believe that I must die as others, and follow at my turn in the way of all flesh. But, Lord, thou hast been pleased to hide from us the issues of thy providence, and dost not suffer us to see the hand that marks out the last hours of our life. We can perceive no shadow to discover to us, with certainty, what shall be the going down of our sun: we know not at what hour of the day, or of the night, thou wilt call us to appear before thy great tribunal. Give me therefore grace, O most merciful God, to be always
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ready to answer to thy call, and to obey thy holy commands; that I may be as a ship at anchor, that stays only for a wind to set sail; or as a soldier, who waits only for a signal to march to the encounter. Give me grace, O good Lord, that I may be like the good and faithful servant, who expects his master's coming, and hears his voice as soon as he calls; or like the wise virgins, who are ready to meet the bridegroom, and to follow him to the marriage chamber. Since I am not to know either the time or the place when Death will come to me, O that I may expect and wait for it every moment, and at every place! O that I might live in such a manner, that I may be always ready to die! that my soul were always upon my lips, prepared to fly away! that I were continually in readiness to commit it into thy hands, O my God, my faithful and merciful Creator! By this means I shall receive Death with joy, when it comes as thy servant and messenger; and I shall follow it willingly, being certainly persuaded that it will lead me into eternal life, and transport me into thy glorious and immortal palace. Amen.

CHAP. IX.

*The third Remedy against the Fears of Death is, to consider that
GOD hath appointed the time and manner of Death.*

WE are either hypocrites, who draw near unto God with our lips, and honour him with our tongues, whilst our heart is far from him, Matt. xiv. or we must desire the accomplishment of the will of God, and resign ourselves wholly to it; for every day we say to him in our prayers, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;" therefore we cannot abhor nor fly from Death so cowardly, if we be rightly persuaded as we ought, that God hath limited the time, and appointed the manner of our death. That which

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causes us to complain of this last enemy, is a continual eye that we have fixed upon the power of the flesh, and a too great confidence upon second causes. We are like the dog that bites at the stone that strikes him ; for we commonly curse the means that God employs to call and withdraw us out of the world.

It will easily appear that God hath numbered our days, and that by his wonderful and eternal wisdom he hath decreed the hour and moment of every man's death ; for besides what our Saviour Christ saith in general, that " God hath reserved the times and the seasons in his own power," Acts i. Job tells us expressly, " The days of man are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," Job xiv. The royal prophet speaks to the same purpose in the xxxist psalm, " I trust in thee, O Lord ; I said, Thou art my God, my times are in thy hand." He is of the same judgment in the xxxixth psalm, " Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth." And Psa. lxxviii. Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death." He also teacheth us the same lesson in his divine hymn, Psa. xc. for when he had represented how that it is God that reduceth man to ashes, and maketh him return to his first substance, he tells us, speaking unto God, " Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return again, ye children of men."

King Hezekiah's comparison is very notable : he compareth the life of man to a thread that God hath twisted, and that he cuts off at his pleasure, Isa. xxxviii. " Mine age is departed and removed from me as a shepherd's tent ; I have cut off, like a weaver, my life ; he will cut me off with pinning sickness ; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me." Hannah, Samuel's mother, removes all difficulty, and confirms this truth sufficiently, 1 Sam. ii. 2. " It is God," said she, " who killeth and maketh alive ; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." There is nothing more significant

allant to the same purpose, thus the Lord and Saviour's words, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death," Rev. i. This great God and Saviour closeth the gates of the grave when he pleaseth, and it is not possible to open them against his will. Ephesort, "Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv.

And our reason being enlightened with divine revelation, teacheth us this good and profitable lesson; for if God hath a hand in our conception and birth, and if he appoints the time of our entrance into the world, wherefore should not he also have a hand in our death, and mark out the time of our departure? David speaks thus to God in Psa. cxxxix. "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth: thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members are written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them." We may therefore speak unto God in the same language: My substance shall not be hid from thee, when this miserable body shall fall to pieces, as rotten wood, and as a moth-eaten garment; thine eyes shall see me, when Death shall cut off the thread of my life, and separate what thou hast joined together so wonderfully by thy power and wisdom; thy providence shall dispose of me at my departure, and nothing shall happen to me but that which thou hast fore-ordained in thine unsearchable decrees.

If God appoints the time of our resurrection, and if it be certain, that without his express commission the Holy Spirit will not breathe upon our dry bones to cause them to revive; it is not probable that our bodies shall fall into the bed of corruption, without the orders of the great and living God,

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Ezek: xxxvii. He hath appointed the sun in its course, and to the stars that shine in the heavens, their several motions and stations, **Isa. xl.** And should he not also appoint to his children their motions, since they are to shine for ever in the heaven of heavens, where righteousness dwells, as so many immortal stars? He hath measured the water in his hand; he hath compassed the heavens with his span; he hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills with a balance; he hath fashioned the earth with his hands, and given bounds to the roaring sea; and is it possible that he hath not measured the time of our life, and that he hath not marked out with his finger the last moment? He who hath numbered the kingdoms of the heathen princes, hath he not also numbered the days in which he intends to reign in our hearts by his holy Spirit? Hath he not appointed the time for us to ascend up into the highest heavens, where we are to reign with him in the kingdom of his glory?

If it be certain that God hath numbered the hairs of our head, **Matt. x.** it is not to be doubted but that he hath also numbered the days of our life. And if a sparrow fall not to the ground without his order, how can it be that a man can take his flight up to heaven without his express condition? He bottles up our tears, he keeps a record of all our afflictions, and takes an account of our sorrows, **Psa. 1.** and can we imagine that he doth not keep an account of the life and death of men, and that he minds not the time that we are to spend in the valley of tears? He takes notice of our rising and of our down-sitting; he compasseth thee round about, whether thou dost stop or go, **Psa. lix.** And can it be conceived but that he observes thy rising at thy birth, the several passages of thy life, and thy going down at thy death?

In short, if God hath appointed, in his eternal counsel, the continuance of the great world; he hath also, without doubt,

doubt, limited the life of man, the little world, and the image and compendium of the great, as our Lord and Saviour teaches us. Man is not able by his solicitous care to add one cubit to his stature ; and our experience sufficiently demonstrates, that we cannot add a year, a day, or a moment, by all our labour and industry, to the continuance of our life.

If life and death were not in God's hand, there would be nothing settled or constant, either in the kingdoms of the world, or in the church of Christ. The prophets would be often found in grievous errors, and the eternal election would be totally abolished; for the most weighty affairs of a commonwealth depend upon the life of princes. The death of one man is able to turn an empire upside down, and to change the state of the kingdom. If Alexander the Great had been stifled in his cradle, what would become of the prophecy of Daniel, who declared the glorious victories that this prince should obtain against king Darius, the Persian monarch, under the emblem of an he-goat, that should run at a ram with all his might, that should break his two horns, and trample him under his feet ? And if king Cyrus had died before the obtaining the kingdom of Babylon, how should Isaiah's prophecy be accomplished ? For he paints out this young conqueror in the most lively colours, and calls him by his name in this expression ; " I have said of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure ; even saying unto Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built ; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid," Isa. xliv.

If the devil could have destroyed St. Paul's life, before his journey to Damascus, where he was strangely converted by a miracle, how could God's immutable decree be accomplished ? for he had designed him, from his mother's womb, to be a noble vessel of his grace and mercy, and a " faithful ambassador of his Son," Gal. i. If the penitent thief had died
before

before he had seen the light, or if he had been killed in one of his robberies, how could he have been converted upon the cross, where he repented of his crimes? Or how could he have heard from our Saviour these blessed and comfortable words, " Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt be with me this day in paradise ?" Luke xxiii.

The heathens have perceived and understood this truth, but they have darkened and defaced it by their impertinent and ridiculous fictions: for their poets tell us there are three *Parcæ*, or infernal goddesses; the one holds the distaff, and spins; the other winds up the thread; the third cuts it, and puts a period thereby to the life of man. By this fable they intend to teach us, that God lengthens or shortens at his pleasure man's life. As it is therefore certain that God has numbered our days, he hath also appointed, in his infinite wisdom, the means to convey us out of the world. If one dies in peace, another is killed in war; if one departs in his bed, another is hanged upon a gibbet; if one perishes with famine, another is stifled with the plague; if one is struck with thunder, the other is torn in pieces by wild beasts; if one is choaked in the waters, the other perishes in the flames; in short, if the separation of the soul from the body happens in a different manner, it is not without the express leave and orders of our heavenly Father.

Therefore when we see the strangest accidents come to pass, and the most unexpected tragic deaths before our eyes, we must remember the saying of the prophet Jeremy, when he saw the burning and plunder of Jerusalem, " Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good, Lam. iii. We must then consider with the prophet Isaiah, that it is God that creates light and darkness, and that sends prosperity and adversity, Isa. xv. 45. or
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with Amos, who enquires whether "there be any evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. That is to say, that there is no affliction nor death that happens, but God hath appointed it, and fore-ordained it by his wise providence. If the devil cannot destroy Job's flock of sheep, nor hurry headlong into the sea the herd of swine, without his leave who holds him fast in chains, Matt. viii. let us persuade ourselves, that all the powers of hell and the world cannot cause us to die by a violent death, if God hath not ordained it before in the resolutions of his infinite wisdom: so that if at any time a prince or magistrate speaks to us in Pilate's language to our Saviour, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and power to save thee?" John xix. being strengthened with a holy confidence, let us answer him as our Saviour, "Thou couldst not have that power over me, if it were not given thee from above." Without the leave and the pleasure of my God, thou canst not take from me an hair of my head.

We read in the book of Judges, that when Abimelech assaulted the tower of Thebez, with a resolution to win it on a sudden, a woman cast from the top a piece of a mill-stone, that fell upon his head and brake his skull, Judg. ix. If we look only upon second causes, this accident may appear to be strange and unexpected; but we must lift up our eyes to the almighty hand of an all-seeing power and wisdom, far more dexterous than that of this poor woman; for the same relation declares, that God by this means brought to pass Jotham's prophecy, and rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren with his unmerciful hand, upon his own guilty head.

Ahab king of Israel was disguised, with a design to fight with the Syrians, 1 Kings xxi. An unknown soldier lets fly by chance an arrow out of his bow, which struck him in the
weakest

weakest part of his armour, wounded him to death, and the dogs licked the blood that issued out of his wounds. At this sight a carnal and earthly mind may say, that this was but an accident of war ; but the Spirit of God informs us better, that this happened to fulfil the prophecy of Elijah, and the dreadful threatenings which he had pronounced against this wicked prince, who laboured, by tyrannical and devilish means, to invade other men's possessions : " Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine," 1 Kings xxi.

When we cast our eyes upon the tragical death of Josias, king of Judah ; at the first sight it appears but the effect of the boiling heat of youth, which carried him against reason obstinately to fight with Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt ; or of the strength and swiftness of his enemies, according to the complaint of Jeremiah the prophet, " Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of heaven, they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness ; the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen," Lam. iv. But to understand the truth, we must enter farther into the sanctuary, and adore the wisdom of God's decree, that had resolved to take away this good and religious prince into eternal rest, and bestow upon him a more noble and richer crown, before he took in hand the sword of vengeance to punish the people of Israel for the many idolatries and horrid crimes of which they had been guilty: by this means God fulfilled the prophecy of Huldah, " Behold, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered unto thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place," 2 Kings xxii.

When we look upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may imagine at the first view, that only the

Pharisees' envy, Judas's treason, the mutiny of the rude rabble, Pilate's injustice, Herod's jests, and the cruelty of the Roman soldiers, were the causes of this tragedy; but the holy apostles Peter and John, unto whom our Saviour had discovered the rarest secrets of his wisdom, consider the outward agents but as the instruments to bring God's great design, man's redemption, to pass; therefore it is spoken of in this manner, Acts iv. "Against thine holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thine hand and thy counsel determined to be done."

If it happens that a friend unadvisedly strikes another; if in a wood where he is felling timber, the head of the axe should slip out of the handle and kill the dearest friend of the agent; there can be nothing imagined to be more casual in regard to the second causes, Exod. xxi. But God declares in express terms, that he caused such an one to be under the hand of his friend who killed him against his will. To secure the innocent author of the unexpected murder, God appointed cities of refuge for such to fly to, Numb. xxxv.

As when the hour of our death is come, all the riches of the world cannot pay our ransom; all the wisdom of the most prudent counsels, or strength of a kingdom, are not able to free us from the power of Death: on the contrary, when it pleaseth God to shelter and preserve our life, all the subtilty and cunning of the devil, all the power and fury of the world, cannot take it from us.

Esau, in his rage, full of vengeance and displeasure against his brother, resolves to kill him. On purpose to accomplish this cruel design, he goes to meet him with four hundred men. But God, who holds in his hand the hearts of all the men in the world; God, who turns the stony rocks into

fountains of water, and the flints into rivers of oil, forced out of his hardened heart tears of compassion and love. The same Esau, instead of drawing out his sword against his brother, embraced him with expressions of kindness, kissed, and wept over him.

Jacob's sons had wickedly intended to destroy their brother Joseph ; they were ready to imbrue their cruel hands in the blood of this innocent lamb ; but by a secret and wonderful providence God stopped their hellish design. This great and sovereign Monarch of the whole world, who draws light out of darkness, made use of the most damnable malice and hatred to accomplish his good purpose, and to raise his servant to a considerable degree of honour and glory which was prepared for him. These inhuman souls, full of envy and displeasure, conspired together, how to hinder the fulfilling of Joseph's dream. But, contrary to their intention, they made way and were instrumental to the accomplishment of that which God had revealed to his prophet : therefore when his brethren were afraid lest he should revenge himself upon them, when he had power in his hand, he answered them, with a heart full of charity and love, " I am in the place of God. As for you, ye thought evil against me ; but God meant it unto good, Gen. l. 19, 20.

David, a man after God's own heart, fell into many fearful dangers, so that he was reduced oft-times to the very gates of death ; but God preserved " his soul from the grave, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling," Psa. cxvi. In the wilderness of Maon, king Saul had surrounded him with his men on every side, so that no help or succour was to be expected from man, 1 Sam. xxiii. But by a wonderful providence God delivered him : for when he was ready to be caught, a messenger comes to inform Saul, " Make haste and come, for the Philistines are entered into thy land ;" so that

that neither the inhuman persecutions of this tyrant, nor the abominable plotting of his unnatural sons, nor the tumults and revolts of the people, nor the most furious tempests of hell and the world, have ever been able to extinguish his life before the time appointed. When he had spent all the days allotted to him by God's good providence, he fell asleep, as a man who lays himself down to rest quietly, after a long and laborious task.

Queen Jezebel was enraged against the prophet Elijah : she had sworn by her gods that he should surely be put to death ; but by a miracle God kept him out of the bloody hands of this incarnate devil, and by another miracle he preserved from famine and hunger him whom he had before preserved from Jezebel's sword and fury ; he sent the ravens to feed him with bread and meat, morning and evening ; and for his sake God increased the widow of Sarepta's oil and meal. When he was ready to be famished in the wilderness, God dispatched an angel to him to carry him meat and drink. In short, all the storms that the devil raised against him, could not destroy his life ; so that when God had resolved to crown his labours, he fetched him away in a chariot of fire, and carried him up into heaven.

The Syrians were resolved to take the prophet Elisha, because he discovered their most secret counsels, and frustrated all their designs : therefore they besieged the town of Dothan, to seize upon this man of God. When his servant beheld the dreadful number of horses and chariots, which surrounded that weak city, he cried out in a fright, " Alas, master, what shall we do ?" And he answered, " Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them," 2 Kings vi. At these words of Elisha, the eyes of the poor man were opened, and he saw an innumerable company of chariots of fire, and horses of fire, which God had sent from heaven to guard his servant the prophet.

The Jews often plotted against our Saviour Chrisr, and attempted to kill him, John x. They came so near to the execution of their bloody design, as to take up stones to cast at him, and knock him down ; and to bring him to the side of an high mountain to throw him headlong: but he always escaped out of their hands, and passed through the midst of them without any harm. It was impossible for them to lay hold of him, when they had undertaken and resolved it. The reason which the Spirit of God gives, is, because that "his hour was not yet come," John vii. 18.

The high priests and the Sadducees were inflamed with a hellish fury against the holy apostles: they laid hands on them, and cast them into the public prisons, Acts v. But because the time of their martyrdom appointed by God was not yet come, he sent his holy angels to free them from their chains, and set them at liberty. When Herod saw that the Jews thirsted for the blood of God's servants, the apostles, Acts xii. and that they delighted in their execution, he cut off the head of James; afterwards he took Peter, clapped him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers, with intention to bring him to execution after the feast of Easter. But the hour was not yet come in which his holy apostle was to be crucified for the glory of him who was crucified for his salvation. Therefore the night immediately before his designed execution, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the keepers before the door. On a sudden a great light shined in the prison, and the angel of the Lord came and smote him on the side, and raised him up, saying, "Arise up quickly;" and his chains fell from his hands, and the angel said unto him, "Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals;" and so he did: Then he saith unto him, "Cast thy garments about thee, and follow me; and he went out and followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he had seen a vision. But when they were past the
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the first and second ward, they came to the iron gate, which opened of its own accord; and when they were passed through one street, the angel departed from him: then Peter being come to himself, said, Now I know of surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hands of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

In short, when the hour is not yet come, which God has marked out, and appointed to take unto himself his faithful servants, there is no miracle so great but he will shew it for their sake; he dries up the seas, he stops the lions' mouths, he denies to the fire its usual heat, he keeps them alive in the midst of the floods and flames, in the whale's belly, in the fiery furnaces, and in the deepest gulfs.

If we did but examine the memorials of our forefathers, and consider the things that we have seen with our eyes, and experienced from our infancy, we should find, that the means which God had employed, and which he does daily employ, for our deliverance, are no less wonderful than those of former ages. God's arm is not shortened, his almighty power is not lessened; he hath yet as much authority as ever, over men and devils; and divine Providence is no less watchful for the preservation of such as fear and worship him. If we had the eye of the soul as open as the eyes of our body, or if we could but perceive the things that are of themselves invisible, we should see, that God looks upon us continually with the eye of his love, and of his fatherly care; and that he covers us with his hand, as with a buckler of proof, against all the darts of the world and of hell; we should see, that we are encompassed about with a wall of fire, and that the holy angels guard us on every side. We should then acknowledge, that it is God who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved, *Psa. lx.* And we should cry out as David, "O God,

God, who is like unto thee ? Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth : thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Psa. lxxi.

Although this wholesome and most useful doctrine be plainly taught in holy writ, and sufficiently confirmed by so many examples out of the word of God, some there are that oppose it with many needless objections.

In the first place, they say, that God promiseth length of days to such children as are obedient to their fathers and mothers ; from whence they think to infer that our life hath no certain time limited, that it is prolonged or shortened, as we prove obedient or disobedient to God and his holy laws.—There is no difficulty to give an answer to this objection.

That in the language of the Holy-Spirit, the word that signifies there *to prolong*, signifies not always to make a thing longer than it was, or should be, but only to make it of a long continuance. So that God promises not here, that the children who shall obey his sacred laws shall enjoy a longer life than otherwise it ought to be, but only that he will do them the favour to let them live long and happy in this world. We may prove this exposition by St. Paul's words, who paraphrases the first commandment of the second table in this manner, " Children, obey your fathers and mothers in the Lord, for it is just : Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long upon the earth."—This promise is to be understood with some exception; if God should judge it expedient for his glory, and for the good of his children : for there are many pious and obedient children, whom God withdraws out of the world in the flower of their age, to give them an happy life, which shall have no other limits than eternity.

In the next place, they allege the remarkable history of king Hezekiah, unto whom Isaiah was sent with this message, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." Nevertheless, God was entreated by his prayers and tears, and prevailed upon to suffer him to live longer. Therefore the prophet told him, that God had added fifteen years to his days. To this objection I answer :

That, according to the ordinary course of the world, and the disposition of the natural causes, Hezekiah was to die of that disease ; for the scripture saith expressly, that Hezekiah was sick unto death ; that is to say, that his disease was mortal in regard of the second causes, and the ordinary course of nature. Therefore these words, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," ought to be understood with this exception : Thou shalt die, if I do not deliver thee by a miracle, and if I do not employ mine almighty power to heal thee, and restore thee to thy former health.

This may be also understood in another manner : Thou shalt die, if thou dost not repent, and turn unto me with prayers and tears. In the same sense God caused it to be proclaimed in the streets of Nineveh, "Within forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed."

Let not any man conclude from hence, that Hezekiah's repentance was the cause of the lengthening of his days, and therefore that it was a casualty very uncertain. On the contrary, we may understand, that God, who had appointed, by his eternal decree, that this wise and religious prince should live beyond the disposition of his body, had also resolved to draw from his heart sighs and groans, and tears from his eyes ; for God knew all his works from eternity, Acts i.

Others argue against this doctrine, more impertinently,
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That if God had numbered our days, and prescribed our life its bounds, it is in vain to take so much pains, and to make so much ado about our bodies distempered with sickness; and that it is to little purpose to administer any remedy to them, or to pray for the recovery of their health. In like manner such may affirm, that it is to no purpose to eat or drink, and to hinder mad persons from casting themselves down a precipice, or from swallowing poison, because they shall live neither more nor less than God hath ordained from all eternity. This objection may seem very plausible at first, although it be most absurd, and so foolish that it must needs proceed from great ignorance or malice; for it is not to be doubted, that when any one aims at an end, he designs and supposes by consequence to attain unto it by the ordinary means. For example, God had appointed in his eternal counsel to preserve Jacob and his family from that famine which raged the space of seven years: in order unto that end, he sends Joseph into Egypt, to gather up provision the seven years of plenty. Isaiah the prophet had told Hezekiah, from God, that he should live the space of fifteen years more; therefore he commanded him to apply to this prince's sores and boils a lump of dried figs. God had promised to David, that he should be king over the house of Israel; to confirm this promise, he had been anointed with oil by the prophet Samuel. This promise doth not hinder him from seeking the means to preserve himself from Saul's unjust persecution. And when Nathan tells him, that God had promised to establish his posterity upon his throne after him, this doth not stop his prayers, or cool his devotion: on the contrary, it was that which quickened him the more, and inflamed his soul with love and thankfulness to God; therefore he expresseth himself in this manner; "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, thou hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee," &c. 2 Sam. vii.

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew for certain all that should happen to him ; nevertheless, we find him spending the days and nights in prayer ; and when his life was in danger, he neglected not the lawful and harmless means. He told his apostles, " Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father ; but the very hairs of your head are numbered." This consideration hinders him not from commanding them, that when they are persecuted in one city they should fly to another.

God had appointed to save St. Paul's life, and the lives of all the company ; therefore he revealed it to him by an angel ; nevertheless when he saw the mariners seek to escape, he told the centurion, " If these do not stay in the ship, you cannot be saved," Acts xxvii. In short, the means and causes are subordinate to the end in such a manner, that it is mere folly and extravagancy to offer to divide them, or suppose them to be contrary.

It is without reason that some bring the history of king Asa against this undoubted truth. They affirm that this prince was reprov'd for seeking to the physicians in his sickness. These are the words of the holy scripture ; " Asa, in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great ; yet in his disease he sought not the Lord, but to the physicians," 2 Chron. i. —The Spirit of God blames not this prince, because he desired the assistance of the physicians, but because he neglected to seek help of God, or to implore his aid in the day of his distress. He that is sick may as freely take physic, as he that is well may eat and drink ; yet we must not altogether repose our confidence and trust upon the remedies, but rather upon God, who sends both sickness and health. As man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God ; so it is not by

the physic alone that the patient is cured of his distemper, but by the blessing and power of him who gives the wound, and binds it up ; who strikes and heals when he pleaseth, Job v. Therefore as we ought never to eat or drink before we pray to God to vouchsafe his blessing upon our meat and drink, that he may grant to them the virtue of recruiting the decayed strength of our bodies ; likewise we should never take any physic, without lifting up our hands to God for a blessing, that the remedy have the strength to expel our disease. All God's creatures are good when they are received with thanksgiving ; for they are sanctified by the word of God, and by prayer, 1 Tim. iv.

Take notice here how much such persons are to be blamed, who, when they lament for the loss of their friends or kindred, instead of looking up to heaven, look down upon earth, and consider nothing but the exterior cause of their grief : instead of adoring, with all humility, the wise providence of God, that disposes of all worldly events, and appoints the meanest circumstances, they fret and murmur ; they delight to nourish in their minds displeasure, which consumes them ; and break forth into many needless complaints, which serve but to open their wounds, and to render them more miserable. If it had not been in such a place, if he had not been engaged in such a way, if such a physician had not been called, or if another had been sent, if this or that had not been done, if this physic had not been administered to him, if less or more blood had been taken from him, if he had been suffered to eat more meat, or if less had been given, my brother, or my sister, my wife, my child, or my husband, had been yet alive. It may be thou art mistaken, friend ; the disease could not be cured but by a miracle : but when it should be otherwise, we must nevertheless lift up our eyes to God, and acknowledge his finger with all respect : for oft-times he blinds the physicians, so that they cannot understand the nature of the disease, and suffers

suffers them to apply remedies contrary to the distemper. As God threatens to take away the staff of bread, that is to say, the nourishing strength and virtue of the bread, Lev. xxvi. likewise he takes away his blessing from the most sovereign remedies, and renders them altogether useless. It is thus with all other accidents that happen unto us, and bring us to our graves; for when it pleaseth him to remove any body out of the world, he suffers him to shut his eyes to all the light of reason and prudence, and to cast himself headlong into the most apparent danger; as when he designed to destroy Absalom, and to cut him off, he caused him to be led away by evil counsel, and disappointed the discreet and prudent advice of Ahithophel. Therefore, since God hath appointed or fore-ordained, before man's creation, the time and manner of his death; at what hour, in what place, and by what means soever God calls away our friends, or strikes at our person, it is always our duty to possess our souls with patience, and not to suffer the least repining or despairing word to proceed out of our mouths.

If Death suddenly snatch away thy dearest children, or thy most intimate friends, complain not of its inhumanity. Remember that it puts in execution the decrees of God's everlasting will, and that it carries with it a commission sealed with the signet of the living God. Adore therefore with all humility the supreme Monarch of heaven and earth, and say to him as David, with a profound submission, "Lord, I held my tongue and said nothing, because it was thy doing," Psal. xxxix.

I do not wish thee to have a heart of flint, without natural affection. Piety and religion are not barbarous, they deprive us not of our bowels; the affection that thou bearest thy children is not displeasing to the Father of mercies, if it be but well governed, and do not exceed the natural bounds. It is lawful for thee to be sensible of thy griefs, to
weep

weep for their distempers, and to pray for the recovery of their health : but when God hath disposed of them, and received them into his eternal rest, thou must stop all thy sighs, wipe all thy tears, and say as David did after the death of his beloved child, " We shall go to them, but they shall not come to us," 2 Sam. xiii.

Do they die of a violent death ? Stop not thy consideration at the evil blasts that have carried them away, but lift up thy mind to the great God, that draws these winds out of his treasures ; and being armed with a holy constancy, say with the patient Job, " The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." I am but a weak instrument, which God hath employed to put them into the world ; but he is their King, their Father, their Creator ; he is also their Saviour and Redeemer. Now it is both just and reasonable, that God should dispose of his subjects, of his children, of his workmanship, and of those whom he hath redeemed with his precious blood.

The master of a family gathers at his pleasure the flowers and fruits of his garden ; sometimes he cuts off the buds, sometimes he suffers them to blossom, sometimes he gathers the green fruit, sometimes he stays till it be ripe ; and shall not Almighty God have the liberty to dispose, at his will, of all that grow in his own territories ? The master of the family hath not created the trees and plants that are at his command ; but God has made and fashioned, with his Almighty hand, all his children, and all the men in the world. Our flowers wither and spoil in a moment, and our fruits are soon rotten, and become unprofitable, notwithstanding all our care and skill to preserve them ; but the flowers that God cuts or pulls off, he transplants into his heavenly garden, and gives them a perfect and divine lustre and glory, that never fades ; and the greatest fruits that he gathers, he preserves for all eternity in unspeakable sweetness.

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Doth this Death draw near to threaten thy person, when it hath dispatched thy dearest friends? Be not frightened at its appearance; for it is not able to anticipate a moment the hour appointed by the wisdom of Almighty God; and when that moment shall be come, that he shall call thee to himself from heaven, offer no resistance, and stop not thy ears at thy Creator's voice: say, with the prophet Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," 1 Sam. iii. Exod. xxxiii. O merciful God, since thy glorious presence goes before me, I am ready to depart out of this crazy tabernacle, and to quit this miserable wilderness, to enter into the heavenly and happy Canaan; say with our Saviour, "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee," John xvii.

Hast thou lived many years upon the earth? Ascribe not the cause to the constitution of thy body, to the manner of thy living, nor to the skill of thy physicians; but remember that God lengthens thy days, and come and cast at his feet thy reverend grey hairs, which the holy scripture styles, "A crown of silver, or a crown of glory," Prov. xvi.

Art thou threatened with death in the flower of thine age? Fret not thyself at it, and let not the least word proceed out of thy mouth but what is seasoned with the salt of true piety. Remember that it is God alone cuts off the thread of thy life, and puts a period to thy mortal race. Thou hast as much reason to be grieved because thou art born so late, as to be sorry that thou diest so soon. Instead of spending thyself in useless complaints, which is as if thou, who art but an earthy vessel newly formed, should cast thyself against the Rock of eternity; remember to adore and praise thy great Creator, and return him hearty thanks in that he is so well pleased to crown thee in the middle of thy race, and so bountiful as to bestow the salary of the whole day upon thee, who hast laboured but a few hours

hours. He is very favourable to thee to transplant thee before thou hast felt the heat of the day, and the scorching of the sun. Remember, that it is the pleasant gale of his divine mercy that drives thee so fast into the secure haven of eternal happiness. Think not, therefore, that God's calling thee away in thy strength, is a testimony of his displeasure and hatred ; for to hasten and render a person most happy is no sign of ill-will. It may be that God calls thee, because he hath found some good thing in thee, as in Abijah the son of Jeroboam king of Israel ; because he loves thee dearly, and favours thee, he intends only to remove thee from the approaching evils, as he did Josias, one of the holiest and most religious princes that ever reigned ; because thou dost walk before him, and seekest to please him, he will take thee up into his holy and heavenly paradise as he did Enoch, for fear that the temptations of the world should alter thy religious disposition ; and for fear that the enemy of thy salvation should prevail upon thee, by his continual and wicked suggestions, to leave the way of righteousness, in which thou dost walk at present. As there are some rich stuffs, whereof the ashes are the most precious, and others, whereof the cinders are good for nothing but to be cast away ; thus there are some happy grey heads, where the rich and precious relics of righteousness and piety shine, whereas others are only fit to discover the follies and vanities of our human nature. As there is some sort of wine that grows better by old age, and preserves its strength until it comes to the dregs ; whereas other wine there is that soon becomes sour and useless : likewise there are some men, whom old age makes better and wiser ; so that they are like to the Indian trees, that yield precious perfumes and frankincense only when they begin to decline and wither. The old age of such is most honourable, and sends forth a blessed perfume of piety ; whereas others corrupt with age, and give out a most filthy stench : under a white head they hide a black soul, and wicked conscience. In the decay of their
age,

age, the vices of their mind gather strength and flourish. Instead of weeping for the sins of their youth, they add sin to sin, and are more hardened in evil. Old age imprints more furrows and wrinkles in their malicious hearts, than it doth upon their foreheads. Neither men nor their lives are to be measured by a yard or an ell. We must not only consider how long we have lived, but how well we have lived and employed the course of this life; for there are some young men, who have the wisdom and prudence of grey heads; and there are grey heads that become as weak as infants; and some that scarce go out of that simple age. The first are twice children, the others continue always in their childhood. Some young men have performed such brave and glorious deeds, that one would judge by the passages of their lives that they have lived several years or ages. On the contrary, some old and decrepit persons can scarce prove that they have been long in the world, unless it be by the church register, by their grey hairs, or by the great number of their wicked and abominable actions. This consideration causeth the author of the book of Wisdom to say, that "old age is not the most reverend, that can shew a number of years; but wisdom is to be reckoned old age amongst men, and a life without spot," chap. ix. It is certain he hath lived sufficiently, who hath learned to live well, and hath prepared himself to die well. To what purpose should this miserable and languishing life be lengthened a few days? Art thou afraid to be happy too soon? and fearest thou to see the end of thy torments? Doth the traveller endeavour to lengthen out a painful and dangerous way? Doth the workman grieve to have finished betimes his laborious task? Doth the soldier murmur because he comes off from his watch and guard? Miserable man! what are all the years for which thou dost so impatiently afflict thyself, and vainly desire? For a day with God is as a thousand years; and a thousand years, in his sight, but as one day.

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He that sails upon the sea admires the spacious extent of the waters, and the difference of its rolling waves, that mount up sometimes to the clouds, and then fall down again into a bottom. And such as travel by land are delighted to see on one side deep vallies, and on the other high mountains, that reach above the clouds ; but if God had but taken us up into the seat of his glory, and that we should from that high heaven cast down an eye upon this contemptible globe of the sea and land, to behold the proud and stately mountains, with the most swelling waves, they would appear to us but an even plain ; or rather they would seem altogether very little. Thus when we compare the men of the world the one with the other, we shall find that some have lived long, and others but a little while ; that some are old, others young ; but in respect of God, there is no difference between the young and the old ; between an over-aged Methuselah, who lived nine hundred threescore and nine years, Gen. v. and a child that hath only seen the light of the living ; for the life of mankind is but a moment in comparison of eternity.

If thou art ready to die for righteousness, of a violent death, meditate seriously upon the saying of the prophet David, *Psa. cxvi.* "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of all his saints." Arm thyself with an holy confidence, and say with Eli, *1 Sam. iii.* "It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth him good." Imitate the generosity of St. Paul, *Acts xx.* and grave in thine heart these divine expressions : "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me : but none of these things move me, neither count I myself dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Remember always the prayer that our Lord and Saviour offered up unto God in the greatest agony ; "O my Father, if this cup may not pass

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away

away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Forget not also at this time Christ's advertisement, "He that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall save it to eternal life," John xii. O great and glorious Lord God, the enemies of thy truth are met together against thy dear children, whom thou hast sanctified by the blood of the covenant: but they are not able to do any thing but what thou hast appointed to be done in thine eternal wisdom.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION upon the Time of Death.

O MERCIFUL Lord, who dost govern all things by thine infinite wisdom, and hast reserved the times and the seasons in thine own power; thou hast not only written my name in the book of the living, but hast also measured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. Thou hast numbered my days, and prescribed to me my bounds, that I cannot pass beyond them. This miserable body is but a weak tabernacle made up of earth, subject to all manner of infirmities; nevertheless, none is able to destroy it without thy divine assistance. The same hand that hath fashioned and formed it, must break it in pieces. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without thy permission, it is not possible that my soul should fly away into heaven, without thy warrant. My God and Father, give me daily apprehensions of death; but let me rest upon thee, who dost kill and give life, who dost cast into the grave, and fetch from thence again. Let Satan and all the enemies of thy glory lay their snares for me, they are not able to do any thing but what thy wisdom hath ordained and appointed before the foundation of the world; without thy leave and permission, they are not able to pluck an hair from my head, nor diminish a moment from the time I am to live in this earthly tabernacle. O Almighty and most merciful God, I

recommend to thee my soul, as to my faithful Creator, and yield it wholly into thine hands. Here I am to accomplish thy will, and to submit myself to thy pleasure, without any resistance ; whether this soul, which thou hast created after thy likeness, and which is an image of thy divinity, remain in this body, that I may be able to serve thee on earth ; or whether thou dost call for it, and take it up into heaven, that it may glorify thee in the company of thy saints, and of the blessed and glorious angels.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION upon the Manner of our Death.

O GOD, the Creator of all flesh, and the Father of the immortal spirits, I know that every kind of death of thy children is precious in thy sight, and that howsoever that shall happen, thou wilt take care of my soul. When I consider all things, I find that it matters not whether my spirit issues out of my lips, or out of a wound, so that it enters into thy glory to enjoy thine eternal happiness. What matter is it if my lamp goes out of its own accord, or if it be blown out by some envious blast, so that it be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteousness, and continue for ever glorious in the highest heavens ? I shall be sufficiently happy if I die in thee, Lord, and enter into thine eternal rest, from all my labours, in what manner soever death assaults me. From all eternity, O Lord, thou knowest all thy works, and with a glance of thine eye thou discoverest the depths, and seest into an endless eternity. As thou hast marked out and appointed the moment of my death, thou hast also ordained the manner of it. I must, O Almighty God, repose myself upon thy wonderful and wise providence, and be contented with thy uncontrollable decrees. But, O my God, and heavenly Father, if thou wilt give me the liberty, who am but dust and ashes, to speak to thee,

thee, and to send up the thoughts of my heart ; I beseech thee to be so gracious, as to let me know my end, that I may not be surprised on a sudden by an unexpected death, as Job's children ; and so merciful as to give me timely notice of my departure, as thou didst to thy servant Hezekiah. I desire not the notice of many years, but of a few days, or at least of a few hours immediately before, that my soul may not be disturbed with evil thoughts, or frightened with false conceits, and malicious suggestions of the devil ; that I may end my days with all tranquillity and satisfaction of mind ; that I may always have a perfect use of my senses, of my reason and understanding, and the assistance of thy grace ; that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours, until the last moment of my departure. Suffer not therefore my soul to be snatched away by force on a sudden, but grant me time to commit it into thy merciful hands. Amen.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for one that dies in a strange Country in the midst of Infidels.

O MY God and heavenly Father, how grievous is this trial ! Who can express the troubles of my mind ! At the moment of my most urgent necessity, and of the oppression of soul, at the time of my agony, I see myself destitute of all human assistance. Here I am at a distance not only from my country, and pleasant company of my friends, and deprived of all spiritual comforts, of which I have at present greatest need in this extremity ; but also, to my unspeakable grief, here I am in a strange place, in the power of my cruel enemies. I have nobody to strengthen me in the faith of my Saviour Christ. All things that appear before me, increase and add to my trouble ; I am here among the adversaries of thy truth, who labour to destroy my in-

target in Christ, and cause me to perish, now that I am entering into the haven of eternity. I must encounter with Death, with hell itself, and with the subtle insinuations of the infernal spirits. O Almighty and merciful Lord, suffer me not to lose my courage, and to yield to the present temptation. By thy wonderful providence, and out of thine abundant mercy, supply all my wants and infirmities, and grant that I may, with the shield of faith, quench all the fiery darts of Satan. I am beset with many visible and invisible enemies; but they that are for me are more in number than they that are against me. It is true, I am far from heaven, whereof the earth is the centre. I am at a distance from all my earthly friends; but nothing can put me at a distance from thee, O good God, who lovest me with an unchangeable affection. I am in the embraces of my heavenly Father, and of my God: I have not the assistance of a minister to help me in my grief and pain; but I know that thou wilt send me thine holy angels, as once to thy beloved Son in his bitter agony. These angels shall protect me against all the powers of the prince of darkness: thou wilt administer to me, thyself, the sweet comforts of thy salvation; thy rod and thy staff will assist me in this valley and shadow of death. O Lord, thou dost things that are not to be searched out, and so many wonders that it is not possible to number them; thy grace is sufficient for me, and thy power is made manifest in mine infirmities. Thy holy Spirit, who is the true Comforter, and the great power of the Almighty, shall refresh me in these my afflictions, and in all things shall make me more than conqueror. Thou art stronger than all other beings, so that I am persuaded nothing can ravish me out of thine hands. I am certain, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can separate us from the love that thou hast declared to me in Jesus Christ my Lord; this precious faith, with which thou hast strengthened my soul,

soul, shall vanquish the world, triumph over hell, and destroy Death in its own empire. Amen.



A PRAYER and MEDITATION upon the Death of a beloved Person.

O MY God, I acknowledge that there is nothing certain nor unchangeable on earth, but thy precious and holy promises; therefore it becomes us to enjoy the things of the world as if we enjoyed them not. Thou hast snatched me out of my embraces, and pulled from my bosom, my greatest darling, and most intimate friend. Thou hast opened my heart, and torn my bowels, and thou hast separated me from myself, so that my life is but a burden and pain to me. I did often look upon this pleasant object of my love as a gift from above, and a mark of thy favour and liberality; it was my greatest joy, and my sweetest comfort. The day that took it away overwhelmed me in a sea of grief. That which doth most disturb me, is, that I am afraid that this is a stroke and an effect of thy anger and justice. O Lord my God, I must needs acknowledge, that I have grievously offended thee, seeing thou dost thus chastise me with so much severity, and makest me feel so sharp an affliction. I am unworthy of all thy favours, seeing thou dost take from me such a precious jewel, which was shewed to me as lightning. I am afraid I have been wanting in my duty, and that this death that kills me, is the effect of my stupidity and blindness: methinks I could have hindered this doleful accident; for if I had behaved myself otherwise than I have done, my life and soul should not be in its grave. O God of all comfort, pardon my excessive grief, pacify my sighs, stop the current of my tears, remove all these vain displeasures that consume me, deliver my soul from

from this unmerciful grief and torment that it suffers, and from these troubles that are more than human : instead of looking to the interior causes, and to the circumstances of the death of this beloved person, give me grace to remember, that the least things, as well as the greatest, are governed and ruled by thy wise providence, and that the good and the evil proceed from thy divine appointment. Give me grace to consider, that thou dost hold in thine almighty hand the keys of life and death, and thou alone dost cast us in the grave, and liftest us up from thence again. O Sovereign Monarch of the universal world, who dost not only let Death loose, but also appointest all the circumstances, make me truly submissive unto thy sacred pleasure, and to put my finger upon my lips, because it is thy doing. If I open them, let it be to adore thy justice, and sing forth thy praises. The person for whom I lament so much, was nearly related to me, like another self, and was also thy creature, thy child, and a member of our Saviour's mystical body. We, for our parts, believe we have the right of disposing of our workmanship, and of that which we have bought with our money : and hast not thou, O God, the liberty to dispose of that which thou hast created after thy likeness ? bought, not with corruptible things, as with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of the Lamb without spot or blemish ? Thou hast a Son, who is the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy person, whom thou hast not spared for me : and shall I, Lord, refuse thee my heart and my bowels ? Thy only-begotten Son came down upon earth to suffer the most cruel and ignominious death of the cross ; but thou hast taken up into heaven the person whom my soul loved, to crown him *(or her)* with a glorious and ever-happy immortality. Shall his *(or her)* felicity be the cause of my afflictions ? and shall his *(or her)* rest occasion my displeasure ? It is the property of true love to prefer the happiness of the beloved person to our satisfaction ; therefore our Saviour told his apostles, If you did love me,

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you would rejoice, because I go to my Father; for my Father is greater than I. Between thee, O great and living God, and us miserable worms of the earth, there is as vast a difference as there is between the innocent and harmless delights of this world, and the unspeakable pleasures of thy presence: for these are but as drops of water, that are dried up with the least wind; whereas the satisfactions of heaven are like a bottomless sea of delights, in which we shall swim for ever. Do I therefore weep for him (*or her*) whose tears thou hast wiped away? Do I wear a mournful apparel, and black scarf, for him who is now covered with a glorious attire of joy and gladness, who is adorned with an habit as white as snow? Do I delight myself in darkness, and doth he solace himself at the fountain of life and glory? Do I seek a solitary and melancholy retreat, and doth he rejoice amongst the thousands of angels, and the glorious company of immortal spirits? I sigh and groan, and he sings a new song, the song of the blessed, which is always in his mouth. All my complaints and groanings cannot bring him back on earth; but if that were possible, it is not just to attempt it; my kindness would be cruel; and my love must be inhuman. How could I resolve to make him leave the haven of eternal felicity, to expose him again to the furious waves and storms of this troublesome sea of the world; to engage him in fresh encounters, to clothe him with the rags of mortality, to take him out of rivers of pleasures, and bring him back again to a sea of gall and bitterness, and feed him again with the bread of affliction? Can I be so cruel as to wish him out of thine embraces, and the ravishing enjoyment of thy favour and eternal life, to deliver him again into the torments of mortality? The shortness of this life reminds me of my departure after him to the light of the living, where we may again enjoy one another. O Lord, truly wonderful and various in all thy dispensations! it is not only for the advantage of this happy creature, and thy glory, that thou hast taken him into thy rest; but for my good,

good, and the instruction of his surviving friends; to put my obedience and faith to the trial, as thou didst the father of the faithful, whose trial was far greater than mine: for thou commandedst him to sacrifice his son with his own hands; but thou requirest from me no other sacrifice, but my submission to thy holy will. I will therefore speak in Eli's language, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth good;" or as Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Thou hast taken from me what I highly valued on earth, that I might look up to heaven, whither he is departed from me. Grant me therefore grace to put an end to all these sighs, groans, and tears, and spend no longer my time and my breath lamenting the loss of my beloved object; but that I may employ myself to prepare for my removal out of this earthly tabernacle. Grant that I may imitate the piety, zeal, faith, and constancy, and all other virtues, of such as thou hast admitted into thine eternal rest, and crowned with everlasting joy and happiness. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! Amen.

CHAP. X.

The Fourth Remedy against the Fears of Death is, to disengage our Hearts from the World.

THE children of Israel decamped from the wilderness with a ready mind, and went joyfully over the river Jordan, when God commanded them so to do. The cause of their readiness was an earnest longing for the land of Canaan, and their unsettled condition in the wilderness, having nothing but tents to live in. Death is to us the same, in regard to our heavenly paradise, as the river Jordan was to the children of Israel, in respect to the promised land. Therefore from hence it appears, that the strongest motive

to oblige us to a resolution of entering into this passage willingly, is to free ourselves from all things that might encumber, stop, or tie us to the world, and keep ourselves always in a readiness to depart.

For that purpose it is not necessary that we should go out of the world, but that the world should be banished and driven out of us, and that we should renounce all vanities and unruly affections, so that we might be able to say with the apostle, "The world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world:" for there be many who depart out of this world, but leave their hearts and most tender affections behind: as Lot's wife that went out of Sodom, but left there her treasures and delights, her most ardent desires: as the Israelites, who, when they went out of Egypt, left behind them their cursed affections, with their pots of flesh and onions.

The same thing happens to many, who separate themselves without any necessity from the acquaintance of mankind, and who affect a strange and austere kind of life. They leave the society of wise and virtuous persons, and the lawful use of the blessings which heaven has granted them; and they deprive themselves of all that deserve esteem, and the means of glorifying God, and edifying their neighbours. But many times they carry with them their corruption, their vices, and a legion of wicked thoughts and carnal desires. By this means they give way to the devil, and expose themselves to all his temptations; for that wicked serpent delights rather in the dens of wild beasts, and in the caves of the earth, than in the palaces and dwellings of princes and kings. The most abominable vices creep and breed rather in the deserts and places of retreat, than in public, and in great cities that are full of inhabitants. Lot remained chaste in the most abominable city that was in the world; but when he went aside to the foot of a mountain, and into the cave to dwell, he defiled himself

with a monstrous incest. When Satan intended to tempt our Saviour Christ, he carried him into a desert and to the top of a mountain. From hence we may learn, that this subtle enemy of mankind had learnt, by his long experience, that the places of retreat, and the most solitary, are the fittest to lay his snares. If our Saviour, who was wholly innocent and free from sin, hath been able to overcome all manner of temptations, we are not of the same temper, we are not furnished with such armour as he was, of proof against all the inflamed darts of the devil : for our miserable flesh delights in its own destruction, it opens the ears and the heart wide to the deceitful promises of Satan, and suffers itself to be cheared by his damnable enchantments. It flatters us, and causes us to be lulled asleep in its bosom : then, like a treacherous Delilah, it betrays us into the unmerciful hands of our great enemy.

Some clothe themselves with hair, and wear at their girdles a knotted cord, whom the devil drags to hell with the invincible chains of lust. Others climb up to the top of frozen mountains, and yet their hearts burn with impure flames. Some affect a mournful solitariness, whose desires and longings are for the world and its vanities. Others have their hands lifted up to heaven, whose minds are enslaved to the earth, and rooted in the rotten and filthy pleasures of the age. Some have a lamp burning before them, whose understanding is wrapped in gross darkness, more palpable than that of Egypt. Others have an empty stomach, whose soul is full of abominable passions. In short, some live in appearance like angels, and yet are possessed with legions of infernal spirits. Others seem to have no concernment in the world, and yet lodge the whole world in their hearts.

Under a coarse habit dwell oft-times more envy, more vanity and ambition, than under the glorious attire of silk and gold. Through a torn habit, some souls may be perceived
swelled

swelled with pride and arrogance: and in company of beggars are to be found many times the designs of kings, and the lofty thoughts of the greatest monarchs. To speak plainly—the good things and advantages of this life do not stop and wed us of themselves to this world, but rather that love and affection which we bear to them.

For without doubt, there be many that are more earnest and affectionate for the things they want, than others that enjoy them. Some poor people have a far greater longing for riches, than ever Solomon had in the midst of all his great treasures. Some silly women, who are covered with old rags, and some contemptible Joans, have more vanity and pride in their brains, than ever had queen Esther in her richest and most glorious attire. The prophet Daniel was raised to an high and eminent honour; for he was the governor of the third part of the monarchy of the Persians and of the Medes; nevertheless, he was no more concerned in Babylon than if he had had there but a sepulchre, and worn the chains of a slave; he sends forth as many sighs, and pours as many tears, at if he had been sitting upon the ashes of Jerusalem.

Some pitiful beggars are more loth to quit their rags, than sovereign princes to lay down the ensigns of their dignity and honour. Such are more enslaved to their filth and easiness, than the greatest monarchs to the glory and splendour of their empire. Death labours as much to free a man from his prison, and take him out of his dungeon, as to drive him out of his palace, and to tumble him from his throne; the poor and the indigent, who have no other bed to lie upon than the hard ground, make as much resistance as the rich, who are stretched upon the softest couches. The galley-slaves are as unwilling that Death should loose them from their chains, and take them out of their misery, as the kings and princes are to leave their sceptres and their crowns. I am fully persuaded,

sueded, that David was more willing to go from his command, and from his riches, than many poor wretches are to depart from their dunghills and their meanness. Some persons are tormented with the gout, the stone, and other grievous and sensible pains; they desire nevertheless more passionately to live, than many who enjoy a perfect and flourishing health. Carnal and earthly souls are so much wedded to the earth, that they feel a great reluctancy, and an unspeakable displeasure, when they are to depart from a body rotten and falling to pieces with old age; whereas others, who are most spiritualized, and that have tasted of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, depart most willingly out of young and lusty bodies, flourishing in their strength and beauty.

We must not therefore remove out of the world our legs and arms, but our affections and vain lusts. If God bestows upon us his earthly blessings, we are not to follow the example of that extravagant philosopher, who cast into the sea his silver and his precious stones, that he might not have the trouble to keep them, and who lost them willingly, that he might not be in any further danger of losing them afterwards: but we must take heed, that they cause not our faith to make shipwreck, and that we regard them not more than our consciences; for the soul is a far more precious jewel than the body, and the life is far more considerable than clothing. Seeing that God bestows upon us so many good things, with an intent that we should enjoy them, we should shew ourselves unthankful to his goodness, contrary to his wise providence, and unjust and cruel to ourselves, to refuse the means of ever using and employing these blessings. All God's creatures are good, and none are to be rejected, but received with thanksgiving; for they are sanctified by the word of God, and by prayer.

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The honour and riches derived to us from our birth, or that we obtain by lawful and just means, are to be ranked among the blessings of God. Therefore Esther, who was but a poor stranger, received with joy, as a favour from heaven, the imperial crown that was put upon her head, and refused not to be the wife of the greatest monarch of that time. Joseph accepted willingly the power and dignity with which king Pharaoh had invested him; and the prophet Daniel did not only take the honourable commands which were bestowed upon him by the king of Babylon, but he employed his power and credit to raise all his companions to places of trust, and to the government of that empire.—God sometimes gives sceptres into the hands of cruel and profane persons; such as were Pharaoh, Ahab, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Herod, to teach us, that it is not the chief good of man, and that we must aim at a more excellent kingdom, and at more solid and constant felicities. He also places upon the throne men according to his own heart, whom he cherishes as the apple of his eye, as David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josias, to teach us that the fear of God, and the expectation of an immortal crown, is not inconsistent with the honours of this life, nor with worldly glory: for true piety hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come.

The riches of the earth are no more hurtful than the honours and dignities, unless it be by accident; they are very useful and advantageous to such as employ them well, and dispose of them with religious discretion. They are powerful helps to true piety, and excellent means to glorify God, and to exercise our mercy and compassion; I may say that they give a lustre to the zeal and charity of God's children. Riches turn to evils, and are ill bestowed, in the hands of a brutal sordid Nabal; at the disposition of a merciless glutton, as in the gospel; of a perfidious and treacherous Judas;
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of a silly and debauched youth, as the prodigal son : but they are the blessings of heaven, when they fall into the hands of a Joseph, who nourisheth therewith his father, and all his kindred ; into the hands of a David, that employed them in offerings to Almighty God in the sight of the people ; of a Solomon, who built a magnificent temple ; and of a Mary Magdalen, who spent them not in luxury and vanity, nor in curious trinkets, but to buy a box full of precious ointment, which she poured on the head of the Saviour of the world. These are blessings indeed, when such an one enjoys them as Cornelius the Centurion, who employed them in alms, where of the perfume ascended up to the throne of the God of mercies. In short, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal wisdom of the Father, hath uttered out of his sacred mouth, that it was more blessed to give than to receive, Acts xx.

I am not ignorant of the oracle pronounced by this great God and Saviour, " That whosoever doth not renounce father, mother, houses and lands, for my sake, is not worthy of me," Matt. x. This was said to teach us, that we must renounce with heart and affections all things in the world, and of this present life, and that we must be always ready to forsake all, in case we cannot keep them without offending God, and giving a scandal to his church. But without such absolute necessity, God requires not from us, in any place of scripture, actually to quit and leave our worldly possessions.

I know also very well, that when a young man inquired of our Saviour, " What he was to do to inherit eternal life," this wise teacher returned him this answer, " Sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have riches in heaven ; then come and follow me," Luke xviii. This was a particular commandment made only to that man, upon a singular occasion ; from whence it is not possible that we should gather any conclusion to oblige others to the same
action:

action : for otherwise this might oblige all Christians in general to sell what they have, without exception, and to give it to the poor. The commandment was given upon this occasion : this vain-glorious Pharisee boasted of having kept all the commandments of God from his youth up. To remove this good opinion of himself out of his mind, and to give vent to the swelling of his pharisaical pride, our Lord puts him to a trial, enjoins him to sell all his goods, and to give them to the poor. At these words the young man went away very sad in a confusion, because he had much riches, and his strongest affections were fixed there. By this he discovered that he was far from loving God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, because it appeared that he loved his worldly possessions more than Christ and his blessedness. You may therefore understand without difficulty, devout souls, that this commandment made to this young man extends not to all in general. If it had been so understood, the holy apostles, who were mindful of every thing that tended to perfection, would not have rested satisfied with the loss of their goods, to follow Christ, as they declared to him themselves : " We have left all, and have followed thee," Matt. xix. but they would have reserved nothing for themselves ; which course they never took : for St. John, Christ's beloved disciple, had a dwelling-house, where he entertained the holy Virgin after our Saviour's death, John xix. And the other apostles had their ships, their nets and tacklings : therefore after Christ's resurrection they returned to their fishing-trade.

Our Saviour, upon the occasion of the young man's refusing to obey this express and particular command of selling his goods, and giving them to the poor, informs his disciples, " That it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." But he explains in another place this passage in such a manner, that he leaves not the least difficulty in it ;
when

when he saith, that it is hard for them who put their confidence in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God, *Matr. xix.* By this we may understand, that he speaks not of all rich men in general, but of such only who put their trust in their riches. Therefore the apostle *St. Paul* does not command the rich men to cast away their estates and goods; but he advises them not to put their confidence in them, so as to become more vain and haughty. In this manner he speaks in *Timothy*, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy," *1 Tim. vi.*

Here are therefore the best directions, according to my judgment, for a true Christian, who desires his soul to be acceptable to God, to attain the dispositions necessary for an happy death.

1. We must employ our most constant and earnest endeavours and affections for the spiritual advantages of the soul, and of the life to come. We must thirst impatiently for the graces of God, and for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We must sigh and long for the spiritual robes of the soul, and labour with all our strength to attain to the incorruptible crown and the immortal glory of heaven. Christ gives us this holy and safe advice, "Seek," saith he, "first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," *Matt. vi.* And elsewhere, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life," *John vi.*

2. As the good king *Solomon* built first the Lord's house, and then laid the foundation of his own palace; thus we ought to proceed to labour first for the advancement of God's kingdom and the edification of his church, that then we may have liberty to employ ourselves about the affairs of

this present life, and about our worldly concerns. But our employment and calling must be just, and warranted by the laws of God and man ; for he that gains riches by unlawful arts, is but a thief and a robber.

3. Before we engage in any work, we must pray to God to vouchsafe his blessing to it, and speak to him as Moses, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hand upon us ; yea, the work of our hand establish thou it," Psa. xc. For without his assistance and blessing all our labours will be in vain, and to little purpose. It is God that makes poor and makes rich, that lifts up and abaseth, James ii. "Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase," 1 Cor. iii. The royal prophet is of the same judgment, when he saith, "If the Lord buildeth not the city, their labour is but lost that build it."

4. Our labour must be without murmurings, and mistrusting God's providence ; we must banish out of our minds all idle thoughts, and groundless expectations, that disturb us, Psa. cvii. We must pluck out of our hearts all the cares and displeasures that trouble us. We must imprint in our minds that excellent sentence of David, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee," Psa. v. and that of St Peter, "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you," 1 Pet. v. We must remember our Saviour's charge, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life," Luke xxi.

5. Above all things we must beware of the slavish vice of covetousness, that denies God's good providence, and his fatherly care. To that purpose St. Paul exhorts us in express words, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and

be content with such things as ye have ; for he hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,* Heb. xiii. That he might beget in us an aversion to this infamous vice, St. Paul tells us, “ They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition,” 1 Tim. vi. He adds next, “ For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows,” Col. iii. The same apostle declares, that covetousness is idolatry, and that it shall never inherit the kingdom of God, Eph. v. Therefore we ought to follow the wise king’s advice, “ Labour not to be rich, but forbear from any such design,” Prov. xxv.

6. If God please to afflict us with poverty, and to cast us down into the dust of a mean estate, notwithstanding our continual labours in a lawful calling, let us endeavour to possess our souls with patience. Look upon Christ our Saviour, who for our sakes became poor, although he was rich, that we might be enriched by his poverty. Let us beseech him to grant us the blessed disposition of St. Paul, that we may be able to speak as he did, “ I have learned to be content in whatsoever estate I am ; “ I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound ; every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” Phil. iv. Remember, Christian souls, to settle your treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal ; labour to be rich in faith, and in good works, that ye may inherit the kingdom that God hath promised to them that love him.

7. But if it hath pleased God to bless thy labours, and his powerful and liberal hand hath raised thee up to great honour, so that thou enjoyest riches in abundance, thou must
remem-

remember to possess them in such a manner, that they may not enslave thee ; and, according to St. Paul's advice, thou must remember to enjoy them, as if thou enjoyedst them not, and that the fashion of this world passeth away. We must not trust upon them, nor pride in them. We ought to glory in something else, as God himself exhorts us : Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, nor the strong of his strength ; let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glories, glory in that he hath understanding, and knows me, Jer. ix.

8. We must not only take off our hearts and affections from the world and its vanities, trample upon them, and esteem them like dung, in comparison of the unspeakable treasures of heaven ; but we must also be ready to leave them at every moment, as so many trifles, vain and perishable things. As we are to possess them without displeasure and fear, so we must part with them without grief or murmuring. Though we should lose in a day all that God hath bestowed upon us in this world, it becomes us to strengthen ourselves with an holy confidence and resolution, saying with Job, " The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord," Job i.

9. If we happen to part with our goods, honours, and dignities in the service of God, and for the profession of Christ's gospel ; in such a case we ought to endure the loss with a Christian patience, and an excessive joy, because that such a loss for a just cause will prove at last to our advantage and glory. This was the practice of the faithful Hebrews, of whom St. Paul renders this testimony, " You have taken joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that you have in heaven a better and more lasting inheritance," Heb. x. Christian souls, represent unto yourselves the example of the prophet Moses, who " esteemed the reproach of Christ
greater

greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi.

10. Whilst we enjoy our goods, we must take care of the poor, and be bountiful in alms; and to speak in St Paul's language, "Whilst we have time let us do good, especially to the household of faith," Gal. vi. Whoever hath compassion on the poor makes God his debtor: he will assuredly return him his good deed, Prov. ix. Our Saviour promises to recompense a cup of cold water that shall be given to the meanest of such as believe in his name, Matt. x. Alms is a seed that is cast upon the earth: but its flowers, and most excellent fruits, are to be gathered in heaven. He that sows liberally shall reap liberally, 2 Cor. ix. It is not therefore as that other seed, mentioned Psal. cxvi. that they that sow in tears shall reap in songs of triumph; for whosoever bestows his alms sparingly and unwillingly, he shall be treated in the same manner as he that refuses to part with it. Therefore St. Paul declares, "Though I should give all my goods to nourish the poor, if I have not charity, I am nothing," 1 Cor. xiii. God loves a cheerful giver, and delights in such sacrifices, 2 Cor. ix. Remember therefore, Christian, that God shall judge you at the last day, not by learning, knowledge, riches, or dignities and honours of this life, but by your alms-deeds, and acts of charity and hospitality, and by distributing of your goods to the necessities of the saints. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations," Matt. xxv. Rom. xii. Luke xxvi. that upon your tomb one may justly engrave, "He hath scattered, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness (that is, his charity and alms-deeds) remains for ever," Psal. cxi.

11. Finally, we must not only take off our hearts and affections from the riches, honours, and vanities of this world,
but

but we must also deny ourselves, tame and overcome our passions, and crucify our flesh with its lusts. Therefore our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ calls upon us from heaven, "He that will follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and come after me," Matt. x.

That we may be able to imprint this good lesson in our minds, we must seriously consider in the first place, that we are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, and that we have no lasting city, Heb. xiii. The houses that God grants to us are no perpetual dwellings, but only inns for our present convenience. This was the frequent consideration of the great patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who saw the promises afar off, and believed and embraced them: for St. Paul informs us, they did ingenuously profess, that they were no better than strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and their intention was to march forwards to their celestial country. This was Jacob's language, when he appeared before Pharaoh: "The days of my pilgrimage have been short and evil: they have not attained to the years of the life of my fathers, and of the time of their pilgrimage," Heb. xii. Gen. xlvii. And not only the ancient patriarchs, who never had any other possessions in the world than a tomb, or some small piece of ground, have acknowledged themselves to be strangers and pilgrims; but princes and kings also, whom God hath sanctified by his Holy Spirit, have freely confessed the same: for David declares, not in the time of his banishment, nor of his flight, nor in his calamities and misery; but in his most flourishing state, and in the midst of his triumphs, glory, plenty, and prosperity, he declares unto God, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were," Psa. xxxix. and cxix. And when he speaks not only of himself, but also of the rest of God's children that are upon earth, he makes no difficulty to confess, "We are strangers and sojourners with thee, as all our fathers were, and our days are

as a shadow upon earth, and there is none abiding," 1 Chron. xxix. Rich and poor, masters and servants, princes and subjects, all of us in general, may, with reason, say to the men of this world, as Abraham to the children of Heth, "I am a stranger and sojourner in the midst of you." Now he that travels in a strange country may gather some flowers in his passage, or take with him a few ears of corn; but if he be wise, he will never tarry to build a palace. If he be well treated in his inn, he must not despise the good cheer; but if his entertainment be bad, he must endure with patience the inconveniences, and condemn all the disorders that happen during his abode. If the way be deep, full of mud, briers, and thorns, he must go out of them as soon as he can; and if it be good and pleasant, he must not stop in it to busy himself with needless inquiries. Every one that is a traveller dreams of nothing but how to advance on his journey, and go forward. Likewise, being accustomed to plenty and want, to riches and poverty, to honour and dishonour, we ought to leave the things that are behind, and to proceed forward to such as are before, that we may attain to the end and reward of our heavenly calling, Phil. iii.

2. Consider not only, I beseech you, that we are strangers and sojourners in the world, and that we are not to inhabit always in this foreign country; but that our passage will be but for a few days, Rev. viii. We need but little to nourish and entertain us in this short race; at the end of it we shall neither hunger nor thirst, and the sun shall burn us no more. As it happened with Jacob and his family when they went into Egypt, they had no other corn nor food but what was needful and necessary for them in the way, because they were certain to meet with plenty of all manner of good things in Joseph's house: likewise we need not make any great provision for ourselves in this life, because we are marching apace towards our Saviour Christ, our elder brother, unto whom

whom God hath given all power in heaven and on earth, **Matt. xxiv.** We are marching into a country that abounds with all manner of true riches, excellency, glory, and happiness.

3. Consider that we are not only Christians, but soldiers, and under the banner of Christ our captain, who judges him that fights justly, **Rev. xix.** Job acknowledges that "there is a warfare appointed to all mortals upon earth," **Job vii.** But I may say, that this warfare is chiefly for such as aim at the glorious immortality, and that God calls them to endure grievous and violent encounters. Therefore St. Paul exhorts his beloved disciple Timothy, "to behave himself as a good soldier in this just war, and to fight the good fight of faith," **1 Tim. i.** Now he that goes to war, must not incurber himself with the enjoyments of this life.

4. Moreover, consider that we are like to soldiers who are engaged in an enemy's country, not with a design to conquer and establish ourselves there, but only to obtain a free passage, having only an intent to pass through into our own native soil. We do not desire to get into our hands the inheritances and possessions of the worldlings, to rob them of their crowns and sceptres. We have no other request to make to them, but that which the children of Israel made to the inhabitants of Edom, when they were going into the promised land, **Num. xxix.** We desire leave to pass peaceably, and go along by the king's highway, to take possession of the inheritance which God hath prepared for us from the beginning of the world. We would not so much as taste of a bit of bread without paying for it, nor drink a cup of water without leave.

5. Consider that this life is a race, and the world the place to run in. Now such as are in a race must take heed that thorns do not catch hold of them in their course, nor that their
their

their feet sink in the mire or the clay ; and that they may run swifter, they must cast off all burdens and incumbrances. If therefore we will run this race in such a manner as that we may obtain the prize, we must look that the thorns and briers of the world take not hold of us, and that we sink not in the mire of the dirty pleasures of this life. We must cast away all the burdens that overcharge us, and especially the burden of sin, which is so grievous, that nature itself groans under it. It is the intent of St. Paul's exhortation, " Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us ; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross," Rom. viii. Heb. xii.

6. Consider that our life is a continual wrestling ; for we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers, against the lords of the world, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, Ephes vi. 1 Cor. x. Now he that intends to wrestle well, must diet himself accordingly. If therefore for a corruptible crown men diet their bodies, render them supple and pliant, and abstain from delights and pleasure; how much more reason have we to do the like, for an incorruptible and glorious crown!

7. Consider that God will have us to be conformable to the image of his Son, and that we must follow his footsteps. —Now this good Saviour represents to us his own condition, Rom. viii. 1 Pet. ii. " The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," Luke x. Therefore he made this confession before Pontius Pilate, " My kingdom is not of this world," John viii. And for that reason he reproves the gross and

earnal expectations of the two disciples as they were going to Emmaus ; “ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ! (Luke xxiv.) Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory ? ” According to his blessed example, we must have but a little portion and concernment in the world, and enter by many afflictions into the kingdom of God, Acts xxiv.

8. I judge that it is also necessary, that we should represent, at every moment, unto ourselves, that, to speak properly, we can have but the use, and not the right enjoyment, of God’s creatures. We are entrusted with his favours, as the stewards of his blessings and riches. At every moment he may call us to an account, and require from us a reason of our behaviour, and take from us our enjoyments. We should therefore look upon our houses and possessions as upon things that are lent unto us : for as we are not displeased to restore what we have borrowed, and what we enjoy, as long as it pleases the lawful owner to lend it ; thus we should gladly leave this present life, and all our worldly possessions, in case we can but persuade ourselves, that all belong to God, and that he hath lent them but for a moment.

9. Moreover, it is necessary for us to consider the fruitless labours and pains that we are at when we purchase the riches of the earth, and ascend up to dignities and honours : for as the husbandman, when he hath manured his field, and watered it with his sweat, is many times deceived of all his fair hopes and expectations, thus it commonly happens to the covetous and ambitious ; they toil and labour in vain : the good which they think to grasp, slides away between their fingers as water, or as wax that melts at the first approach of the fire ; and all the honours which they expect to enjoy and embrace, are as a shadow that soon vanishes, or as a smoke that flies up out of their reach ; when they have well labour-

ed for these vanities, they reap nothing but grief and displeasure.

10. Take notice of the small satisfaction that there is to be found in the most entire and perfect enjoyment of the advantages of this world. They are like drink, which leaves us still athirst ; and like empty meat, which cannot satiate our longing ; like the water of the well of Sychar, whereof our Saviour said to the woman of Samaria, " He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again," John iv. It happens to the worldling, as to him who sleeps hungry, and dreams that he is eating ; when he awakes, his stomach is empty, Isa. xxix. or like to another, who thinks in his sleep that he drinks ; but when his eyes are open, he finds himself thirsty, and his appetite unsatisfied : for he who hungers for money, is never contented with the enjoyment of it ; and he who thirsts for vain-glory, can never be pleased with all the great honours and grandeurs of the world, Eccles. v. Instead of satiating his longing appetite, these things serve but to increase and augment it. The whole world was not large enough to satisfy the foolish ambition of Alexander ; for it is said, he wept when a philosopher told him, there was yet many worlds to conquer. This man, for whom six feet of earth was sufficient, had a mind to command over a thousand worlds, if there had been so many.

11. Consider, that all the treasures and riches of the Indies, and the pomp and grandeur of the world, are not able to bring peace to the soul, nor quiet to troubled consciences. When a poor man has got together a little silver and gold, or when a mean person is raised to the highest offices and dignities, his misery continues still, though it changes its appearance. Oft-times it is so much the more insufferable, in that it puts on a false lustre, and a deceitful gloss, in that such are constrained to live always masked, to suppress the
pangs,

patings, the griefs, the sighs and groans, that often interrupt their profane smiles, and carnal delights and pastimes.

Therefore our Saviour compares riches to thorns, for they prick and gail not only the hands, but the heart and the bowels of such as embrace them with affection. It may be also said that they are like lions and bears ; for they are not to be caught without much difficulty, and they are as uneasy to be kept, because we must take heed that we be not bit with their venomous and deadly teeth. If you had but tried the horrible displeasures, the sensible griefs, and secret fears, with the tormenting cares, that attend upon the most glorious sceptres, and the richest crowns, you would never judge the saying of that prince unreasonable, who exclaimed against his royalty in this manner, " O crown ! if any did but know thy weight, he would never lift thee up from the ground." The most part of the pleasures and satisfactions of this life depends much upon man's imagination, and all his grandeur and human glory is nothing but wind. The royal prophet teaches us this truth with much elegance, when he saith, " That every man at his last state is altogether vanity : surely, every man walketh in vain show, surely they are disquieted in vain," Psa. xxxix. Solomon, the most learned of all kings, the richest and most magnificent prince of his time, had refused nothing to his eyes to gratify his lust ; he had tasted of all the delights and pastimes that can be imagined ; but at last he found so little satisfaction and solid content, that he was forced to acknowledge, That all things under the sun are but vanity and vexation of spirit, Eccles. ix.

12. Chiefly we are to consider, that if our enjoyments have been wrongfully gotten, as Balaam's reward, Achan's wedge of gold and scarlet cloak, Gehazi's changes of raiment, Ahab's and Jezebel's vineyard, Judas's thirty pieces, Num. xxii. Josh. vii. they bring no real content or peace to the soul ;
but

but they rather fill us with gripings of conscience, and with a fearful despair, 2 Kings v. 1 Kings xxii. If the voluptuous worldling, who hath enriched himself by rapine, usury, or extortion, did wring with his hands his sumptuous garments, where his pomp and pride appeared, he would visibly squeeze out the tears of the afflicted and poor people, Matt. xxvii. If he did but relish the right taste of the liquors that he drinks out of his cup of jasper and crystal, he should find, instead of wine and lemonade, the sweat and blood of the miserable; and if he had but seriously looked into the silver and golden vessels that are put upon his table, he should perceive the marrow and the bones of such as he hath devoured. Whosoever becomes fat with the substance of the widow and the fatherless, shall never open his coffers, but he may spy there the image of the devil, and the hellish furies; he may hear the cries and groans of such whom he hath destroyed by his injustice and cruelty. If such escape unpunished here upon earth, they shall surely feel the severity of God's vengeance hereafter. If there be no sword to strike them, nor fire to consume them, nor leprosy to gnaw them, nor dogs to tear them, nor halter to hang them, they have a guilty conscience that will perform more than this; for it will be their witness to accuse them, their judge to condemn them, their rack, their wheel, and executioner, to torture them. The time will come, when the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched, shall torment and burn them.

13. Consider, that it is possible to be very indigent in the midst of great plenty. The poets have had a design to represent this by the fiction of a man thirsting in a river whereof the waters reached up to his chin. The covetous miser represents this miserable wretch. He may also be compared to the fig-tree in the Gospel, cursed by our Saviour Christ, that brought forth no fruit for others, and withered for want
of

of nourishment. Therefore a contented poverty is more worthy than riches with discontent. Nature is satisfied with a little ; piety with less ; but covetousness hath no measure. The heathens have very well acknowledged, that he was the richest who was most content ; for the more things you desire, the more are wanting to you. It matters not much, if the cup which is presented to you be of gold or earth, so that there be liquor enough to quench your thirst. I would rather drink of a little clear stream of water than out of a great river all muddy and troubled. A little quantity of ground is sufficient to nourish a man in this life, but less necessary to cover him when he is dead. A little money satisfies to subsist honestly in the fear of God ; but less is required to die happily, in the favour and love of our good Saviour. Kings, and the greatest monarchs, have but one body to nourish and to clothe, as well as the meanest of their subjects. They who enjoy least in this world, use, or rather abuse, the most of any, the things that they possess. Instead of envying the worldling's opulency, let us meditate upon St. Paul's excellent saying, " Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," 1 Tim. vi. And let us imprint in our minds that other sentence, " Piety with contentment is great gain," 1 Tim. i.

14. Christian souls, cast your eyes upon all the things of the world that are most esteemed, and you shall find that their possession is but uncertain and of short continuance: for riches have wings to fly to heaven as an eagle. " All flesh is like grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the field ; and the world passeth away with all its lust," Prov. xxiii. There needs but the pillaging of a town, the breaking of a merchant, or an unsuccessful or contrary suit in law, to render thee poor, and bring thee to want. A little sparkle of fire is able to reduce all thy riches into ashes, and to bring thee to extreme poverty. The least frown can cover thy face with shame and confusion, and cast thee down from the highest

highest human glory into the deepest abyss of disgrace and ignominy. The wise man informs us, "That he who trusts in his riches shall fall." We may say so of such as rely too much upon great men's favour : for it is like a broken reed that pierces the hands of such as lean upon it. There is nothing here below so constant as inconstancy. If the earth did not often change its face and appearance, it would not be earth as it is : and if the world were not inconstant, it would cease to be a world. Therefore it is no wonder if the heathens, who understand not God's wise providence, that governs the natural beings, and draws light out of darkness, have represented Fortune blind, mounting sometimes on a wheel, and in an instant tumbling down again. How many persons do we meet with, reduced on a sudden to beggary, who a little before flourished in all manner of plenty ! How many are cast down into the dust, and become the scorn of the world, who were once raised to the highest dignities, and the highest honours ! How many fall into the contempt and derision of the vulgar, whose praises were once exalted up to heaven ! In a word, how many do we see before our eyes dragged along the street, shut up in close prisons, brought upon the scaffold and gallows, who were once the glory of the world, admired of all men, and the scourge of honest men ! When we run over, and consider the strange, unexpected, and sudden changes that we have seen in our days, they seem to us as dreams. St. Paul represents this great inconstancy of the world, to take off our hearts and affections from it. "The time (saith he) is short ; it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. Because of this great inconstancy of all worldly advantages, St. Paul invites us to think upon the everlasting riches : "Charge them,

them (saith he) that are rich, that they put not their trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. For the same reason the Son of God adviseth us, "not to lay up for ourselves treasures upon earth, where the moth and rust do corrupt; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where the moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal," Matt. vi. A wise Persian was well acquainted with this truth; therefore he hath left this lesson for posterity, "The world is constant to no man; my brother, apply thyself and thy heart to the great Creator of the world, and that shall suffice thee."

15. Consider, that if riches and honours leave us not in our life-time, or in case none can take them away from us by violence, it is most certain that Death will deprive us of all, and will separate them from us for ever. Psa. xlix. For when a man dies, he carries nothing with him, his glory accompanies him not into his grave. 1 Tim. vi. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out." Job i. The kings and the greatest princes may speak in this language, as well as the meanest soldiers of fortune, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return." All the treasures, riches, sceptres and crowns, shall never advantage us after our decease. What was Nebuchadnezzar the better for having had so great a number of people within his dominions? They could not hinder him from lying down upon a couch of worms, nor preserve him from being eaten with vermin, Isa. xiv. To what purpose did the rich glutton abound in all manner of riches in his life-time: after his decease he could not obtain a drop of cold water to assuage his violent thirst, Luke xvi. The author of the book of Wisdom was entered into this meditation, when he represented the worldlings spending themselves in lamentations

tations for their former follies, and voluntary blindness, "What hath pride profited us, (say they,) or what benefit hath riches brought us? All these things are passed away as a shadow, as a post that runs swiftly, or as a ship that slides through the troubled waves," *Wisd. xvi.* Our heirs give us nothing of all our substance but a winding sheet, a few boards, or, it may be, some pounds of lead; all consumes with us, and rots in our grave in time. In short, we must not only quit and abandon all our honours, dignities, treasures, and riches; but we must also quit this body, this flesh and bones, covered with this beautiful skin. O man! remember that thou art but dust, and thou shalt return to dust.

16. Saladin, the famous sultan of Egypt, hath left to posterity an illustrious testimony of the vanity of all riches and worldly grandeur; for upon his death-bed he commanded that his winding-sheet should be carried at the end of a lance by a herald, who was to proclaim, "Here is all that this great prince hath carried away of his riches, glory, principalities, and lordships, which he enjoyed upon earth."

17. Consider that it is a great cause of grief, that we know not who shall inherit the fruits of all our labours, which we keep with so much care and restless fears. Who knows but our greatest enemies, and, that which is worse, God's enemies, shall clothe themselves with our spoils; and that which we have been gathering many years, shall be spent in a moment? Of this vanity and evil the royal prophet complains, *Psa. xxxix.* "Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them."

18. Consider well, Christian people, the dangerous effects wrought in us by the love of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches: it stifles in our hearts the good seed of the gospel, *Matt. xiii.* it hinders it from growing up to salvation: it

keeps many from glorifying God, and making an open profession of the truth ; as it is said of some of the chief Pharisees, that they believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, but they would not confess him before men, because they loved more the glory of men than the glory of God. Therefore when Cyrus made proclamation, that the children of Israel should have full liberty in their own country to rebuild Jerusalem, to repair God's temple, to re-establish his neglected services, there were many Jews that cared not to obey this prince's command, nor God's call ; because they were settled in Babylon, they were too much wedded to the pleasures and delights of that city, and therefore loth to part with their concerns there for Jerusalem. For the same cause that young man, mentioned before, would not follow the Saviour of the world, nor obey his command, because he had much riches, and had settled his heart and affections upon them. As God's ark and Dagon cannot dwell together under one roof, 1 Sam. v. so the love of God and the love of the world can never subsist together. Therefore St. John adviseth us, " Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world : if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," 1 John ii.

19. Take notice, that this is the passion that stops so many in their first beginnings of piety : for, as Lot's wife was changed into a statue of salt, as soon as she had looked behind her ; so when God sends his angels to take us by the hand, and drag us out of the spiritual Sodom, there is nothing more dangerous than to look with regret and longings for carnal delights and worldly advantages, which we are then totally to quit. That alone is able to stop our proceeding forward, to stifle our zeal, and to cause all pious intentions to vanish into air : therefore we must imprint in our minds this excellent sentence of our Saviour, " No man that puts his hand to the plough, and doth look back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

20. This is the cause that so many persons, esteemed well-grounded in religion and piety, are prevailed upon, at last, to turn their backs to God, and to make shipwreck of their faith. What was the reason of the Israelites murmuring so often, and desiring to return to Egypt? Was it not, as we have already taken notice, because their hearts and affections were settled and fixed on that cursed land, from whence God had delivered them by so many miracles? And wherefore did Demas leave St. Paul and Christ's gospel? It was because he "loved too much this present world." In short, our own experience confirms to us the saying of our Saviour, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will cleave to the one, and despise the other: you cannot serve God and Mammon."

21. Consider, that if these worldly goods and honours do not produce in us these woeful and lamentable effects, they often produce them in our posterity. Many would live happier in the world, and be honester men, if their parents had not left them so much riches and so many honours to possess. Their riches and honours therefore draw upon them many evils, and oft-times they cast them headlong into several debaucheries and insolencies. It is that which fills them full of ridiculous vanity, and of unsufferable pride, that renders them hateful to God and man. In a word, it is that which makes them to forget God, and be unmindful of the treasures and advantages of his kingdom, Prov. xxx. 'Therefore Agur presented this excellent prayer unto God, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Wretched man! to what purpose dost thou labour so carefully to gather up riches for thy children? It may be that these riches which thou takest from others, or which thou dost get with the loss of thy soul, shall serve to make golden calves,

calves, to be the substance of infamous idols, as Gideon's gold, plundered from the Midianites, was employed in an ephod, which became a snare to his house, and to all Israel. Thus it happens many times, that the goods which are gotten with the expence of much blood and sweat, and the honours unto which we climb up with so much earnestness and passion, become a snare to our posterity ; they cast them headlong into an abyss of misery.

22. I should not forget that death is a kind of sleep ; therefore, in holy scripture, to die, and to fall asleep, are to be understood in the same sense. Now, as we cannot conveniently fall asleep, unless we set aside and forget all the troublesome affairs of the world ; likewise it is altogether impossible to die comfortably and peaceably, if we banish not out of our hearts, betimes, all the foolish fancies that disturb us, and all the sharp cares that undermine and consume us.

23. To this purpose, profane history tells us of a remarkable passage of Cyneas, a great minister of state to Pyrrhus, king of Epirus ; that when he saw his master so busy in raising an army, to march against the Romans, he began to argue with him in this manner, Sir, if it please God to grant you the victory over the Romans, how could you employ yourself next ?—The king answered, We will then endeavour to conquer the rest of Italy. And when we shall have Italy in our possession, replied Cyneas, what shall we do afterwards ?—We will go against Sicily, said the king. The discreet Cyneas continued to demand, And when we have all Sicily, what shall we do ?—Pyrrhus answered him, We will pass to Africa, and take Carthage ; and after that we may recover Macedonia, and command all Greece without control. But, sir, replied Cyneas, when we shall have got all in our possession, what shall we do then ?—The king answered him with a smiling countenance, We will then repose ourselves,

ourselves, and take our fill of delights and pleasures. Then Cyneas began to ask the king, What hinders us now, sir, from taking our rights and delights; for we have all that in our hands, that we are going to seek so far, with so much bloodshed and danger?—We may apply this to ourselves; we have most of us intricate and hidden designs, which cannot be accomplished in the age of one man. We are afraid to die, as if Death had already caught us by the throat; and yet we have so many desires to fulfil, as if we were immortal.

We build and adorn our sumptuous dwellings, as if we were never to leave the world: and we are always gathering so much, as if we had the charge of providing for a royal army. Let us therefore, in this case, imitate this wise minister of state; let us ask ourselves, For what purpose are these vast designs? What end do we propose to ourselves of all our labours and care? What do we aim at when we run so many dangers, and endure so many inconveniences? Our souls will answer us, without doubt, that it is with an intent at last to rest ourselves in peace, to live at ease, and to enjoy the fruits of our labours. Let us enjoy that happiness and that satisfaction at present; let us not stay to rest ourselves, until Death shall stretch us in our graves. Let us be satisfied with the goods that God hath already bestowed upon us, and let us use them with thanksgiving. Miserable wretches that we are! why do we labour and torment ourselves for so many things, seeing that there is but one thing necessary, and that is, piety, the fear of the Lord, and the expectation of his eternal felicities? Let us therefore make an election of this good part, and it shall never be taken from us, Luke x.

24. If we desire to imprint in our minds the contempt of the world and its vanities, we must often meditate, with serious attention, upon the excellency of our nature sanctified by grace, upon the worthiness of our spiritual calling, and upon

upon the riches and glory of that eternal happiness which God hath provided for us in heaven. It is impossible to look upon these things as we ought, but we must conclude with the apostle, that the world, with all its pleasures and treasures, is not worthy of us. The woman that appeared to St. John in a vision, was clothed with the sun, having the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. This is a lively image of Christ's church in general, and of every faithful soul in particular: for, when we are clothed and adorned with Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, we ought to trample upon all the pomp and magnificence of the world, and laugh at the revolutions of ages, at the vanities and inconstancy of the earth. We must seek our greatest glory, and our most ravishing delights, in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, who are so many stars shining in the firmament of the church. Let the world alter its face as often as the deceitful Laban, we ought to resemble the rays of the sun, always alike: for our glory is not as that of the world and the prince of the age, which is reduced to nothing. It is not settled upon a vain and failing foundation, but upon the living and true God; who is the same yesterday, to-day, and will be the same to all eternity, Heb. xiv. Some glory in their chariots, others in their horses; but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God, Heb. xiii. *Psa. xxix.*

25. Consider, that God hath given us faces looking up towards heaven, that he might thereby teach us to lift up thither our hearts, and carry thither our affections and desires. He hath created our souls, and given them a spiritual being, that they may take their flight above all earthly matter. He hath adorned them with immortality, that they might condemn all things that are not immortal as themselves, all decaying and perishing enjoyments. In short, seeing that God hath prepared for us in heaven his paradise, his glory, his treasures, and the rivers of our eternal delights, how can we
confine

confine our desires, and be content with this dust of the earth, where serpents crawl.

26. When Alexander was preparing to leave Macedonia, and go to the conquest of the Persian monarchy, he gave away all his goods to his faithful friends and servants. Perdiccas, one of his favourites, inquiring of him, what he had reserved for himself, the king answered, that he had reserved HOPE. Thus ought we to dispose ourselves to depart out of the world, by leaving our parents, friends, and estates, that we now enjoy. And if our flesh inquires of us what we have kept for ourselves, let us confidently answer, that we have kept our HOPE. I may assure you, Christian souls, that this your answer shall be better grounded than that of Alexander to his favourites: for this prince left his patrimony and kingdom without any constraint; but, whether we will or no, we must leave the world. Alexander quitted certain goods for a doubtful hope; but we abandon perishing enjoyments, for an hope more secure and settled than heaven and earth. Alexander's expectation was but of a temporal kingdom, and of a short and vanishing glory; but our expectation is of an incorruptible crown and eternal triumphs: Death, that seized upon Alexander in the flower of his age, put a period to all his victories, and consumed all his trophies; but we are in hopes of conquering Death itself, and this hope will not deceive us, Rom. v. This therefore being our assistance, it is no wonder if St. Paul tells us, "That hope is as a sure and unmoveable anchor to the soul, piercing into the veil, that is, into heaven itself, where Jesus Christ is entered in as our forerunner."

27. God hath hid in the earth, gold, silver, and jewels, to teach us to trample upon the riches and pomp of the world. But he hath raised us up to the highest heavens, our spiritual treasure and our immortal crowns, that we might lift up thither our hearts, and our most earnest affections. He desires
that

that we should imitate the prophet David, who always comforted himself, in his banishment and persecutions, with the expectation of the kingdom promised to him, and confirmed by Samuel's unction. God would have us to do as the true Israelites in the Babylonish captivity; they had always their hearts and affections in Jerusalem; in the midst of their great sorrows Jerusalem was all their comfort. Likewise we, who are wandering up and down this miserable wilderness, who live in the world as in a Babylon, in a kind of captivity, ought to comfort ourselves, and rejoice in expectation of the kingdom of heaven, which hath been prepared for our fruition from all eternity, and whereof the Holy Spirit is the true unction, which hath confirmed the promise of it, and given us the earnest, *Psa. cxxxvii. Gal. iv.* The eye of our faith should always be fixed upon our celestial Jerusalem, that is the mother of us all, and the place of our eternal rest, *Col. iii.* The apostle therefore exhorts us, "If you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; think on things that are above, and not on things on the earth: for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

28. When men are going to live in another country, where their money will not pass, they furnish themselves with bills of exchange, and find the means of receiving it in other coin. Therefore, seeing that our gold, our silver, and our present jewels, will not pass in heaven, the place of our eternal abode, let us send thither betimes all our riches and treasures by bills of exchange. And that we may entrust them with an assurance of a notable advantage, and of a lawful gain, let us put them in God's hands; for he will restore us a hundred times more in his kingdom. Let us now distribute them to the poor, to the members of Christ's mystical body; and this divine Saviour will then acknowledge that they had been given to his own person. You that fear so much to lose
your

your money, get such purses as will never decay, and make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail they may receive you into eternal habitations.

29. Lastly, as the Israelites, when they had tasted of the fruits of the land of Canaan, desired with a most earnest passion to enjoy such a noble and delicious country, and their abode in the wilderness became tedious and insufferable ; likewise we, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the foretaste of our heavenly paradise, let us aspire with our hearts to the heavenly Canaan, and let us long continually for those unspeakable delights. All worldly pleasures should have no relish with us, and the greatest sweetness of this life should be turned into bitterness ; so that we may often present David's prayer unto God, " Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people : O visit me with thy salvation ; that I may see the good of thy chosen ; that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation ; that I may glory with thine inheritance," *Psa. cvi.*

To conclude this discourse—Seeing that we have no lasting city here below, but that we seek for that which is to come ; seeing that we know not the hour when God shall take us out of the world to introduce us into his holy Jerusalem, *Heb. xi. Luke xxi.* let us take heed that our hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and with the cares of this life, lest that day surprise us unawares ; and as the holy apostles left their nets to follow Jesus Christ, *Matt. iv.* let us leave also the vain cares, the ill-grounded fears, and deceiving hopes, that entangle our souls ; that when it shall please God to call us, we may be ready to answer his heavenly message. Let us accustom ourselves sometimes to will what God willeth, and to obey him without resistance. Let us cast all our cares upon God, and repose ourselves upon his wise and fatherly providence, *1 Pet. v.*

Let us look with contempt upon the world, upon its vain grandeur, and upon its decaying riches ; esteem not any thing upon earth, nor that which man is able to promise or procure ; but esteem and value the blessed advantages that we expect in heaven, and that are disposed and entrusted in God's own hands, 2 Tim. i. Tit. ii. Let us prefer Job's dunghill and ashes before the proud throne and glorious monarchy of Nebuchadnezzar. Let us fancy the beggary of poor Lazarus more happy than the overflowing abundance of the rich miser. Imprint in our minds that blessed saying of the Son of God, " What would it profit a man if he gain the whole world, if he destroy himself, and lose his soul ?" Luke ix. Let us have always before our eyes the image of that rich worldling, who had gathered much wealth for his soul, but his soul was not wealthy or rich before God : remember what he saith to his soul ; " Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; rest thyself, eat and drink, and be merry." But what says God to him ? " Thou fool, this very night thy soul shall be taken away from thee ; and the things that thou hast gathered, whose shall they be ?" Instead of studying how to enlarge our barns and cellars, and to increase our revenues and treasures, let us labour to set some bounds to our desires, and let us be content with what we have at present. Seeing we have but a breath in our nostrils, and that we are clothed with a mortal body, let us not entertain such vast designs, nor suffer our longings to be perpetual. Let us always, in every place, be ready to end our life, to put the last stone to its building ; or rather, let us be always in a disposition of dissolving this earthly tabernacle. Let us willingly break all the bands and ties that fasten us to this miserable earth, that when Death shall come, it may have nothing to do but to cut the last string, by which our soul is naturally joined to this languishing body. Settle and fix your strongest affections in heaven, that where your treasure is, your hearts may be there also. Let us not be

lulled asleep, as the foolish virgins ; but, having our reins girded, and our candles lighted, let us be prepared, at every moment, to go and meet our heavenly Spouse, and follow him into the marriage chamber. Let us be like a ship at anchor, ready to set sail with the first fair wind, and as a soldier newly armed, that waits for the day of battle, and for the signal to mount upon his horse, that he may appear in the field at the sound of the trumpet. Let us send, beforehand, all our precious jewels into the most glorious palace of eternity that our bag and baggage being ready prepared, we may have nothing to do but to take our last farewell. If any consideration of flesh and blood hinders us, let us break asunder all these bands by the strength of our Nazarene, that is, by the virtue of God's holy Spirit, which he hath been graciously pleased to grant unto us. And if the persons that we love and cherish as tenderly as our soul, or those whom we are to reverence and honour, labour to stir up the bowels of our compassion, and to impede us in our holy resolutions by base and earthly considerations ; let us tell them, as our Saviour did Mary Magdalene, " Touch me not, for I am going to my Father," John xv. Stop not my course ; for I hold already the prize, and the promised crown. In short, as Abraham let the ram loose, whereof the horns were taken in a thicket, and offered it up in sacrifice to God, Gen. xxi. so let us free our minds from all worldly cares and carnal affections ; let us offer them all up to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice ; let us present them as a burnt-offering, consume them in the flames of an holy zeal and love of his divine Majesty. When the Christian shall be thus prepared, he shall never stand in fear of Death ; he will say to it with an assured countenance, Come when thou wilt, O Death, I desire no reprieve ; for a long while ago I have settled my affairs, and wait for thee with patience. The chief part of myself is not here below ; my heart is already ravished into heaven, where God expects me with open arms. Therefore, notwithstanding

ing thy fearful darkness, and the design that thou hast to destroy me, I will follow thee as courageously and as joyfully as St. Peter did the angel of light, that opened to him the gates of his prison, and freed him from his chains, Acts xii.



*A PRAYER and MEDITATION for such as prepare for Death by
a Renunciation of the World.*

O INFINITE Lord of heaven and earth, who disposest of good and evil by thy divine providence and admirable wisdom ! thou hast not suffered us to have here an abiding city, that we might seek for that which is to come. Thou discoverest before our eyes the vanity and inconstancy of all things under the sun, that we might labour to attain to solid and everlasting advantages. Thou hast placed and reserved in heaven inexhaustible treasures of riches, uncorruptible crowns of glory, and eternal triumphs, that thither we might transport our hearts and affections. The source of heavenly pleasures is with thee, that we might always be athirst for the strong and living God ; and that we might desire, with an holy earnestness, to look upon thy beautiful and glorious face. Most glorious Creator, seeing thou hast bestowed on me an immortal soul, suffer me not to be so wretched, as to doat upon these perishing vanities ; and seeing thou hast made it of a spiritual and heavenly nature, suffer me not to be so unhappy as to wallow in this miserable dust of the earth, or to cast myself into the puddle and dirt of carnal lusts. Give me grace to renounce the world, and all the vanities that the world adores. Give me grace to possess all these decaying things as not possessing them ; that I may trample upon all the pomp and glory of the age ; that I may consider, that the gold, the silver, the precious jewels, whereof the apparent beauty deceives the carnal eye of man, is nothing

slept sweetly, having no other bed but the earth, no other pillow but a stone, no other covering but the heavens, no other curtains than the dark shadows of the night ; likewise a soul sanctified with the Spirit of God, that walks in all the commands of his heavenly Father, shall never be astonished : for wheresoever the sun goes down, wheresoever Death arrests him, he will look upon himself as in another Bethel ; he will sleep quietly in the Lord Jesus, and in the most cruel death he will feel unspeakable and glorious joys, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, Acts xxiii.

We may take notice of this blessed disposition in the apostle St. Paul, who had behaved himself with a good conscience towards God, and towards man, 1 Cor. xv. He had laboured more in the ministry than all the other apostles, therefore he stood in no fear of Death's approaches : but rather we may see him full of expectations and desires to pass through death into glory and eternal felicity : This disposition is no less remarkable in Stephen, the first martyr of Christ, Acts vii. In the midst of the most grievous torments he had a countenance shining as that of an angel, which was a certain testimony of his inward peace of conscience, and of the extraordinary joy of his soul : for as the wise man informs us, " A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance," Prov. xv. From the same wisdom proceeds this other oracle, that foretells unto every one what shall happen unto him, " The wicked is driven away in his wickedness ; but the righteous hath hope in his death," Prov. xiv. Eccles. i. To this agrees the excellent saying of Jesus the son of Sirach, " It shall be well at the last with him who fears God ; he shall find favour at the day of death." This life is but a moment, that flies away apace ; yet it determines our eternal state. It raises us to the highest glory of heaven, or else it casts us headlong into the deepest abyss of eternal misery : for what a man soweth that he shall reap ; he that soweth in the flesh, shall reap of the

the flesh corruption ; but he that soweth in the Spirit, shall reap of the Spirit eternal life.

If you are afraid of a cruel and unhappy death, keep yourselves from an evil and profane life ; for commonly as a man's life is, so is his death. The most part of those who live in filthy lusts and impiety, depart with hardened hearts, or in despair. God's patience wearied out, turns into a just resentment and wrath. Commonly, God leaves at the hour of death such as have left him in the course of their lives. He is inexorable to the cries and sighs of such as have shut their ears and hearts to his holy word, and his fatherly admonitions. He laughs at the amazement and most sensible torments of those who trample upon his sacred commands ; as he tells us, " Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh," Prov. i.

King Ahab desired to hear a grateful prophecy of happy things ; of victory over the Syrian army ; nevertheless he continued in his impieties and tyranny : therefore the prophet Micah was not afraid of his displeasure, but tells him boldly of the approaching judgment of God, which hung over his guilty head. Likewise some sinners desire to be flattered and soothed up in their extravagancies ; they expect, notwithstanding their crimes, promises of joy and prosperity. But we should be false prophets, possessed with a lying spirit, if we did not foretell to such people, that a most lamentable and miserable death hastens apace upon them ; our charity for them would be cruel, if we did not labour to save them by fear, as out of a fire ; if we did not shew them hell with its jaws open, ready to swallow them up, and the eternal torments wherewith God will punish all impenitent and

and hardened sinners. Knowing what God's vengeance is, we must persuade men to embrace faith and righteousness : and if we did fail in this our duty, their blood would be required at our hands.

To what purpose have the heathen philosophers discoursed so learnedly of the shortness of our life ? To what purpose have many of their princes entertained mementos of their mortality, and slightly passed over such thoughts, whilst they reaped little benefit from them, because they did not prevail upon them to reform their lives, and by consequence to prepare for a blessed death ? It was also to no purpose that Balaam desired so passionately to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like a just man's, Numb. xxiii. because he lived the life of sinners, and continued in their abominations and idolatry, Numb. xxxi. therefore died he as they, and was comprehended in their punishment. As he was a partner in their crimes, it was but just and reasonable that he should share in their calamity, and be partaker of their torments.

To abandon vice and sin is to take from Death its venom and all its fiery darts. It is to pluck from this furious beast its teeth and claws. It is to break the cords and chains, by which the devil drags us into eternal damnation. It is to destroy the monsters that fright us, and stifle the furies that pursue us. In short, it tends to change hell, and its grievous torments, into heaven and its glory. There was never yet any person that lived an holy and religious life, but he died happily in the favour of God. Now that the Lord knocks, open unto him the doors of your hearts, and at the hour of death he will open unto you the gates of heaven. Present and give him, whilst you are alive, your bodies and souls, and doubtless he will accept them, and confirm the gift with his own seal. Here below he will enrich you with his graces,

and crown you at last with his glory. "Blessed are they that die in the Lord;" but to die in the Lord, we must live to the Lord, that we may be able to say with St. Paul, "Whether we live, we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

To persuade us to this religious duty, we must consider, in the first place, the command that he gives us of loving him, fearing him, repenting of our sins, and of walking in his holy laws. Unto this he exhorts us in the writings of the Old Testament, as in Deut. chapter vi. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might." And in Isa. viii. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear and your dread." And in chap. iv. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." In the iid chapter of Joel, "Turn ye unto the Lord with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning." And in the first chapter of Malachi, "A son honours his father, and a servant his lord: if therefore I am your Father, where is the honour due unto me? if I am your Lord, where is the fear of my name?"

2. Jesus Christ is not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it, Matt. v. Therefore, in the New Testament, he calls upon us frequently to study piety and virtue. As in St. Matt. v. "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." And in the first chapter of Mark, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." And St. Paul to the Romans in this manner, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the

renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good; and acceptable, and perfect will of God : hate evil, and cleave to that which is good," Rom. xii. And in chapter xiii. "Walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." And in 1 Cor. xvi. "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." And in Ephes. iv. "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And in Coloss. iii. "Mortify your members which are upon earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." In 'Thess. v. "Watch, and be sober ; abstain from all appearance of evil." And in Phil. iv. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." I might with as much ease number the stars of the sky, as reckon up all the passages that call upon us, and exhort us to an holy life.

3. God not only commands upon us to apply ourselves to holiness, justice, and innocency of life; but he proposes himself for our example ; that as the obedient and good children delight to imitate their father's virtues, we also might endeavour to copy out in our lives the divine perfections of our heavenly Father, and imprint in our hearts his sacred image. Therefore in Lev. xi. he tells us, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." And St. Peter repeats the same passage in this manner, "As he that called you is holy, so be ye also holy in all manner of conversation ; for it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." And our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gives us the same lesson, "Love your enemies, bless those that curse you,

you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father that is in heaven. (Matt. v.) For he causeth the sun to rise upon the good and bad, and sends his rain upon the just and unjust be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." The apostle St. Paul speaks in the same manner to the Ephesians, "Be ye followers of God as dear children; put off the old man, and put on the new man, which is created according to God in justice and true holiness," chap. vi. And in Coloss. iii. "Now put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

4. Meditate seriously upon the excellent and precious promises that God hath given to such as addict themselves to piety and good works. As in Exod. xx. "I shew mercy unto a thousand generations of them that love me, and keep my commandments." And in 1 Sam. ii. "I will honour them that honour me." And in Isa. iii. he says to the righteous, "that it shall be well with them; for they shall eat the fruit of their doing." And in Matt. v. our Saviour saith, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And in chap. vi. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," over and above. And in chap. vii. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." St. Paul speaks thus to the Romans, "If by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live," chap. viii. And the first epistle to Timothy, "Piety, or godliness, is profitable to all things, having the promises of this present life, and of that which is to come." And in Rev. xx. "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; the second death shall have no power over him."

5. Con-

5. Consider, that the whole world trembles at the denunciation of the judgments with which God threatens to punish all impenitent sinners ; as in *Exod. xx.* " I am the Lord thy God, strong, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." And in *1 Samuel ii.* " I will honour them that honour me, and will despise them that despise me." And in *St. Matt. xii.* " Of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account at the day of judgment." And in *St. John iii.* " Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, (that is, of a spirit purifying like water,) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And in *Rom. viii.* " They who are in the flesh cannot please God," And in *1 Cor. vi.* " Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." And the apostle to the Hebrews is not content to tell us, that " without holiness no man shall see God ;" but he saith something more, " that if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a terrible expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation, shall devour the adversaries ; for our God is a consuming fire," chap. x. And in the Revelation it is not only said, that in the holy Jerusalem there shall no unclean thing enter, or that committeth abomination, or a lie ; and that God will shut out the dogs, the witches, the fornicators, the murderers, the idolaters, and whosoever doth love or make a lie," chap. xxi. xxii. but the Spirit of God assures us, that the timorous, that is, such as are more afraid of man than of God, the unbelieving, the execrable and murderers, the fornicators and witches, the idolaters and liars, shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

6. Though

6. Though we should speak in the language of angels, though we should give all our goods to nourish the poor, and though we should give our body to be burnt, if we have no charity, we are but like the sounding brass, and like the tinkling cymbal. Though we should be able to perform signs and wonders, if we be not clothed with innocency and holiness, if we be not adorned with meekness and love, Christ will; at last treat us as the foolish virgins, with a "Depart from me; I know ye not." Though we should be able to cast the devil out of other men, it will avail us nothing unless we can cast him out of our own hearts, with all the wicked lusts that he cherishes there. To what purpose shall such cry out at the great day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? have we not cast out devils in thy name? have we not done many miracles in thy name?" Jesus will return them this sad answer, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

7. Consider, that whatsoever be your portion of the advantages of this life, when you shall come to die, you shall carry away neither your riches, your honours, nor pleasures. But if you be rich in faith and good works; if you be clothed with holiness, and crowned with righteousness; if piety and the service of God be your delight, you shall carry away out of the world this spiritual treasure, this celestial glory, and this angelical satisfaction. It is what the Holy Spirit teacheth, when he tells us, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

8. Let us always have before our eyes the blessed examples of so many saints, who have traced us the way to heaven by their piety and good works; they are entered into the paradise of God, and the glory of his kingdom. It is reported of a painter, that when he had a design to represent an accomplished beauty, he borrowed from divers objects the excellencies and perfections with which he was

to adorn his picture. From the lilies he took their whiteness, from the roses their red tincture, from another object the wonder of the eye, from another the coral of the lips, and so of the other parts. Likewise to restore in our souls the image of God defaced by sin, we must borrow the virtues and excellencies of primitive men. For example, represent always to yourselves Abel's innocency, Enoch's holy life, Noah's justice, Abraham's faith, Lot's hospitality, Isaac's obedience, the faithfulness of Jacob, the chastity of Joseph, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses, the zeal of Phinehas, the constancy of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the piety of Josias, the prayers of Daniel, the tears of Jeremiah, the fasting of Esther, the holy earnestness of the woman of Canaan, the devotion of Cornelius, the charity of the Samaritan, the alms of Dorcas and of the poor widow, the publican's humility, the good thief's repentance, the tears of Mary Magdalen, the weepings of Peter, the undaunted courage of St. Paul, and his indefatigable spirit, and the glorious martyrdom of St. Stephen, and of so many noble souls of all ages and sexes, who have gone to the torments with as much joy as to feasts and to triumphs ; and who have sealed with their blood the truth of the gospel with an undaunted resolution. Seeing therefore that we are encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us pursue with constancy the race that is set before us.

9. Chiefly, "Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ;" for he hath left us an example, that we might follow his footsteps. All the virtues that we admire of those faithful souls, are but like many little beams of the Sun of righteousness, and a weak image of his glory. There is no fire so perfect, but yields a smoke ; no righteousness so accomplished, but hath its imperfections, whilst we are clothed with this weak flesh. The behaviour of the most holy and perfect, is spotted with many infirmities ; but our Lord and Saviour

Saviour is the Lamb without spot or blemish, in whose mouth there was no guile: for it was necessary that they should have such an high-priest, who is holy, blameless, separated from sinners. The perfect image of all virtues was never found in any mortal man on earth: but Jesus Christ is the fairest among the sons of men; his lips are full of grace; in him alone we have a perfect model of virtues, and of all imaginable perfection. Therefore when the apostle had persuaded the Romans to renounce the lusts of the flesh, drunkenness, anger, envy, and such like sins, instead of making an enumeration of the virtues opposite to these vices, he thinks it sufficient to propose Christ's holy example; "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," saith he; to teach us, that all the virtues and graces centre and meet in the sacred person of our Saviour Jesus Christ, in the highest degrees of perfection.

10. We are so much the more obliged to imitate Jesus Christ, and to imprint in our hearts his holy image, because that he is not only our Father, our Lord, our King, but he is also the blessed Head of that body whereof we are members. It is not proper to unite defiled and profane members to an Head so glorious and so holy. Whosoever gives himself over to his lusts, and delights in the corruption of sin, maims, as much as in him lies, that sacred body of the Son of God. This consideration drew from St. Paul this expression, "Shall I take the members of Christ for to make them the members of a whore?"

11. The divine Spirit dwelling in our hearts, is a great obligation to holiness of life. Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you? 1 Cor. iii. Shall we be so base as to uncover our filthy and dirty thoughts before so holy and divine a guest? Shall we be so bold as to erect, upon his altar, idols that may provoke him to jealousy? His eyes are so clean and pure, that they cannot

not suffer the sight of iniquity and sin : it is that which most afflicts and grieves him. Therefore when St. Paul had advised the Ephesians, "that no corrupt communication should proceed out of their mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers," he adds immediately after, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." And if there be any that are not moved with the presence of such a glorious person, let him tremble at this fearful threatening, "If any defile the temple of God, God will destroy him," 1 Cor. iii.

12. There were two tables of stone in the ark of God's covenant, where God himself had written his law, which he gave to his people by the ministry of Moses, 1 Kings vi. Seeing that the God of all mercy hath chosen thy soul to be his sanctuary, and the pavilion of his glory, his sacred commandments must be there engraven upon the table of thy heart; thou must be moved with an honest desire for the service of God, and for an exact conformity to his holy will, that we may be able to say to you, what St. Paul said to the Christians of his days, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God : not in the tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart," 2 Cor. iii. And that thou mayest say with the royal prophet, "My God, my delight hath been in thy will; thy law is within me."

13. Let us represent to ourselves continually the great and many obligations that we have to love God, to fear him, to serve him. He is the most perfect of all beings, he is perfection itself, infinitely lovely; so that if there were neither hell to punish us, nor heaven to reward us, he ought to be served and revered, because of himself and his divine perfections. This consideration caused Jeremiah to break forth

into these lofty expressions, "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee," Jer. x.

14. Whilst we are travelling here below, we are not capable of any high and celestial meditation. It belongs only to the angels, whom God hath invested with light and glory; and to the heavenly spirits, whom he hath admitted to the contemplation of his face. Let us therefore seriously consider the blessings and favours which we have received from this great God, who hath created us in his own image, and who hath made us to be the master-pieces of all his inferior wonders. He hath put in us the epitome of the beauties and perfections of the world. He hath given us a being, as to the sun, moon, and stars; a life, like the plants; sense, as to the animals; understanding, as to the angels: in short, he hath infused into this body, fashioned with his own fingers, an immortal soul of an heavenly substance, a beam of his glory, and a living image of his Godhead. My soul, therefore, bless the Lord; and all that is within me, bless his holy name: my soul, bless the Lord, and forget not all his benefits, Psa. ciii.

15. It is for man's sake God hath stretched out the heavens, settled the earth, poured out the waters, and prescribed limits to the roaring sea. For man's sake this gracious Creator hath adorned the heavens with such a number of beautiful stars, hath given to the moon its various motions, with its wonderful influences, hath placed in the sun such a bountiful source of light, and hath appointed the invariable succession of the seasons, of the days, months, and years. For man's advantage and lawful recreation, so many birds sing and fly in the open air, such a prodigious number of fishes swim in the sea, and rivers; the earth is beautified with so

many delicate flowers, brings forth so many wholesome herbs and pleasant fruits, nourisheth so many kinds of animals, and engenders in its bowels gold, silver, and precious stones. In a word, for man's sake, God has created the world, filled it full of so many riches, and beautified it with so many excellent perfections. Therefore it is no wonder if the royal prophet is ravished into an holy admiration, and bursts forth into these expressions, "O God, what is mortal man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou dost regard him! Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honour; thou hast established him governor over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, the sheep, and the oxen, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea." If the example of this great prophet is notable to stir you up, and persuade you to the fear and worship of God, by the consideration of the wonderful works of the creation, hear what the angel declares, that took his flight through the middle of the heavens, having the eternal gospel in his hand, "Fear God, and give him glory; worship him that liveth for ever and ever; for he hath made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters."

16. We have not only in God our life, motion, and being; but he hath not left himself without witness, in doing good, and sending rains from heaven, fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. He nourishes us with manna, and gives us to drink of his abundance. He overshadows us with his protection, and enlightens us with his heavenly fires. He hath always his eyes open to our calamities, and his ears to our sighs and groans. He is always near them that call upon him, yea, them that call upon him faithfully. Let us therefore say, as David, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication; for he hath inclined his ear unto me; therefore will I call upon him all the days of my life," *Psa. civ. cxvi.*

17. Medi-

17. Meditate often upon the advantages that are common to thee with the rest of Christians, and upon the blessings and favours which God hath vouchsafed to any person in particular. Remember how many times he hath sent his assistance from above, how he hath wrought miracles to deliver thee from the evils that threatened thee. Consider how liberal he hath been to thee in the whole course of thy life, what admirable and noble means he hath employed to crown thee with his most precious favour; then thou wilt say with Jacob, "O God, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant," Gen. xxxii. And with David, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee. If I should declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." And being ravished into an holy admiration, thou wilt say, in the language of the same prophet, "O God, who is like unto thee, who when thou hast made me see many distresses and evils, at last hast restored me to life, and drawn me out of the depths of the earth?" Psa. lxxi. "Thou shalt increase my greatness again, thou wilt comfort me." And elsewhere, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me?" Psa. cxvi.

18. The consideration of God's redeeming us, chiefly requires us to deny ourselves, and consecrate ourselves to his service; for slaves do not belong to themselves, but to him who hath redeemed them and paid their ransom. As when God had delivered the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage, he gave them his laws and ordinances in mount Sinai; thus God hath redeemed us from the tyranny of the devil, of the world, of sin, of death, of hell, and from the power of all his enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life, Luke i. He hath given himself a ransom for us, that we might become

become a peculiar people to him, zealous of good works, 2 Tit. ii. You are bought with a price ; glorify then God in your bodies and your souls, that belong to God, 1 Cor. vi.

19. One love must kindle another. The sacred fire come down from heaven must inflame our hearts with an holy zeal for his glory. God hath had so much love for us, that he hath given his only Son, that believing, we might not perish, but have everlasting life. He hath not spared his Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. He hath delivered him to death for us, yea, to the ignominious death of the cross. And is it not just, that we should love him above all worldly things, a God so good and merciful ? Is it not just that we should love nothing but him, and for his sake ? Is it not reasonable that we should offer unto him our bodies and souls, as a living and holy sacrifice, pleasing to his eye ? And if we have any lust that offends him, is it not just that we should willingly leave it betimes, though it should appear as useful to us as our hands and feet, and as dear as the apple of our eye ? Whosoever doth not deny himself is not worthy of him, Matt. x.

20. We must treat the body of sin, which the holy scriptures style the *old man*, and the *first Adam*, almost in the same manner as Christ, the *new man*, and the *second Adam*, was treated upon the cross, Rom. vi. Instead of flattering it, and seeking to satisfy its lusts, we must deprive it of all its pleasures, make it drink vinegar and gall, tear its head with thorns, bind and chain its affections, and nail them to the cross of Jesus Christ, with all its inordinate and brutish desires. "Mortify therefore your members that are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry," Gal. v. Col. iii.

21. To live in sin, to delight ourselves in iniquity, is to frustrate

frustrate, as much as in us lies, our good Lord, from that principal end which he designed in leaving for a while the celestial abode of his glory and immortality : for he is come into the world to destroy the works of the devil. Now the chief work of the devil, the great enemy of our salvation, in which he takes most delight and glory, is sin, with which he ensnares mankind : for by sin, death and all kind of calamities are ushered into the world, John iii. Rom. v.

22. It is to trample upon the only Son of God, to affront the Spirit of grace, and esteem the blood of the covenant a profane thing. It is to render ineffectual the death and passion of our good Redeemer, and pull down his cross : for he hath carried our sins in his body upon the cross, that dying unto sin, we might live unto righteousness. He hath given himself for his church, to sanctify it, and render it a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing. If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkled, did sanctify the uncleanness of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, “ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ? ” Heb. ix.

23. Our Lord and Saviour was not only dead, but also buried, to teach us to bury also with him our sins, and shut up, in his sacred tomb, all our carnal lusts. Do not you know, all ye that have been baptized into Jesus Christ, that you have been baptized into his death ? We are then buried with him in his death by baptism.

24. This glorious Saviour is risen from the dead, and hath left the sepulchre with his funeral attire, to teach us to rise to newness of life, and to leave in our grave the sin that encompasseth us, and the ties of our corruption, that bind us so fast. To speak in St. Paul's language, “ As Jesus Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, we also ought

to walk in newness of life ; for if we are made one plant with him by a conformity to his death, we shall also be one by a conformity to his resurrection. And as Christ, who is risen from the dead, dies no more, Death hath no more dominion over him ; likewise we ought not to apply our members as instruments of iniquity unto sin ; but we ought to apply them unto God, as being made alive from the dead," Rom. vi. " He is dead and risen again, that he might have dominion over the dead and the living. If any be in Jesus Christ, let him be a new creature. Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new," Rom. xiv. 2 Cor. v.

25. Jesus Christ, after his glorious resurrection, ascended up into heaven, to lift up thither our hearts, and to draw thither our affections, and to teach us to reform our manners, to live an holy, angelical, and celestial life. If you are risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God ; think upon things above, and not upon things on the earth, Coloss. iii.

26. There is nothing in the world so lovely as virtue : it is the delight and pleasure of heaven, the daughter of the living God, and the true and lively image of the great Creator. O blessed dress of a Christian soul ! O rich and precious ornament of God's children ! O heavenly grace ! what rare and strong charms hast thou, to win the hearts and affections of all such as behold thy perfect and divine beauty !

27. On the contrary, there is nothing so ugly and ill-favoured as sin : it is a woeful monster of hell, and a frightful image of Satan. I confess it disguises itself, and takes a beautiful appearance ; but if you lift this borrowed mask, you shall perceive the devil's fearful looks, and the depths of hell.

28. Faithful souls, weigh in the balance of his sanctuary that dreadful evil that sin has brought into the world. It has
blotted

blotted out God's image, and defaced the beauty of the creation. It hath separated heaven and earth, and kindled a grievous war between God and man. It is an heavy burden, under which nature itself groans; for, because of sin, all creatures sigh, and are in labour until now.

29. It continues yet its woeful effects: for it is sin that grieves the Holy Spirit, afflicts the angels, offends the weak, hardens the ignorant, and that gives an occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme his holy name, and to curse his gospel, Rom. viii. It is sin that gratifies the devil, rejoiceth 'hell, upholds the tottering walls of Babylon, strengthens the kingdom of the prince of darkness, and that causeth him to work with efficacy in the hearts of the children of disobedience, Eph. ii.

30. Lift up your eyes to the cross of Jesus Christ, and you shall perceive how abominable sin is: for neither in heaven nor on earth could be found an offering able to make expiation for it. God hath chosen rather to punish it in the person of his only begotten Son, than to leave it unpunished. O how grievous and deep is the stain of sin, seeing that nothing but the blood of God can wash and cleanse it!

31. When you meditate upon the Lord's death and passion, exclaim not against Judas's treason, the Pharisees' envy, the people's mutiny; don't lay the blame upon the impiety of Caiaphas, the injustice of Pilate, of Herod's scoffs and jests, nor upon the cruelty of the Roman soldiers; but be angry against your own sins, and let an holy displeasure rise in you against your iniquities and crimes. Say to yourselves, Our sins, our sins alone, have betrayed Christ's innocent body, bound and fastened the Lord of glory to the ignominious cross, and delivered him into the executioner's hands. Our sins have crowned him with thorns, nailed him to the wood,
delivered

delivered to him gall and vinegar to drink. In short, our sins have pierced his hands and feet, and opened his side. You would abhor the sight and acquaintance of the hangman that would have fastened your father to the gallows, and you would scorn to kiss his bloody hands. How much more abominable shall we be to God, and his holy angels, if we cherish and delight to entertain sin? whereas we should be stirred up against it with an holy zeal and earnest desire of revenge. Instead of nailing to the cross this unmerciful paricide, and crushing to pieces this hellish monster, if we feed and nourish it in our bowels, we shall then be guilty of crucifying afresh the Son of God, and putting him to an open shame; guilty of trampling him under feet, and of esteeming the blood of the covenant, wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing.

32. Consider seriously the fearful effects that sin produces in you. Have you never been sensible of the horrid and cruel torments of a poor soul disturbed with the sight of his crimes? How sharp and piercing are the remorses of a conscience awakened from a profane sleep! It is a pain and an anguish that cannot be expressed; it causes our head to dissolve into water, our eyes to become a fountain of tears; it causes our blood to be congealed, our skin to become black, our bones to be cracked and broken. It is a common saying, That punishment follows the sin close at the heels; but imagine that it keeps always its company, and is a rack and torture that never leaves the guilty: for, "There is no peace for the wicked, saith my God," Isa. xlviii.

33. Whereas there is no satisfaction like to that of a good Christian, who loves his God sincerely, and worships him in spirit and in truth; there is no kind of delight to be compared to that of a regenerate soul, that applies itself without hypocrisy to the works of piety and holiness, Job viii. For

the quiet of the soul, and the peace of conscience, are of more worth than great treasures, than sceptres and crowns. Therefore the wise Solomon tells us. that the righteous man's heart is a continual feast, Prov. xv. To persuade us that there is nothing like to that hidden manna, to this spiritual food, that the world knows not, and to these angelical and divine pleasures, the holy apostle informs us, that it is unspeakable and glorious joy, and a peace of God that passeth all understanding, Phil. iv.

84. If any delight or pleasure accompanies vice, it is but in appearance, superficial; as a dream, it vanisheth away; for the triumph of the wicked is of a short continuance, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. There is always some thorn, some grief hidden and secret; in their laughter their heart is afflicted, and their joy is cut off by sorrow, Prov. xiv.

35. But the holy joys and celestial delights of one that fears God, and that worships him in purity and innocency of life are solid and lasting; they cast a deep root in the very bottom of our hearts, and enter into the joints and marrow, and disperse themselves all over the inward parts. The gibbets, the wheels,* and the most grievous torments of this life, cannot pluck these joys from us; but they comfort the soul in the midst of the greatest distresses, and heal up the broken bones.

36. The worldlings become weary, tired with the accomplishment of their lusts; are afflicted at their greatest success. They loathe at last all their carnal sports, and their greatest sweetness turns into bitterness; we grow out of taste with the pleasures of sin, so that we begin at last to abhor them. It

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* It was the French custom to break notable offenders upon a cart wheel.

is what Zophar intends to shew us ; when speaking of the wicked, he saith, " His meat in his bowels is turned ; it is the gall of asps within him ; he hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again ; God shall cast them out of his belly," Job xx.

37. It is otherwise with them who apply their hearts to the fear and service of God, and that find his yoke easy and his burthen light, Matt. xi. They take great satisfaction in the ways of righteousness ; they run with an holy freedom to their happy end, and to the prize of their spiritual calling. The more they drink of the waters of Siloah, the more they thirst ; their zeal is like an holy fire, that never saith, " It is enough," Prov. x. As the prophet Moses, after he had been forty days and forty nights conversing with God in his holy mountain, came down with a glorious countenance, shining as bright as the light, with two tables of the law in his hands ; likewise a Christian soul, that hath been lifted up to God by fervent prayer, and been conversing with him in divine meditation, cannot hide its spiritual joys, and its unspeakable delights ; it burns with an earnest desire of glorifying God, and of pleasing him in all things. When the apostle St. Peter saw our Saviour transfigured upon mount Tabor, he was ravished and transported in such a manner, that he cried out, " Lord, it is good for us to dwell here ; let us make three tabernacles." Thus the good Christian, who is enlightened from above, is never weary in the company of God ; if he should live several ages, he would not believe that he had too much time to serve his Creator, to worship his divine Majesty, and to refresh himself with the unspeakable pleasures of his presence. As the time of Jacob's service seemed to him but a few days, because of the love that he had to Rachel ; thus the days that we spend in the service of God seem to be but a few hours or moments, in case our love for God be earnest and sincere.

38. Represent

38. Represent to yourselves the fearful curse denounced against the wicked and profane, Gen. xxix. They carry about them every where the marks of God's anger and just revenge ; they are the objects of his hatred, and odious to the public. They who flatter and fawn upon them most for their own advantage, abominate and curse them in their hearts ; and they who, out of a servile fear, seem to honour and worship them in the light of the sun, would be many times very joyful to dance upon their graves, and to erect a gallows to hang them thereon.

39. It is not so with good men ; they are honoured by God and man, and their greatest enemies admire their virtues. Let us be never so poor and contemptible in the world, we are rich and noble enough, if we fear God as we ought, and obey his holy will ; for the fear of the Lord is our chief treasure, it is our crown, our diadem, and our greatest ornament.

40. The wicked man is frightened and troubled of his own accord ; he trembles in the midst of his guards, and flies when no man pursues : all things scare him ; he is jealous, and distrusts his best friends ; his children are suspected ; and in the embraces of his dearest wife, he slumbers with an unquiet spirit.

41. It is otherwise with a good man ; he marcheth every where with an head lifted up, and his heart rejoiceth in a perfect tranquillity of mind ; for there is no bulwark like that of a good conscience : it is like a wall of brass, that divides and withstands the batteries of times and seasons. He that fears God is free from all other fears, Psa. cxxv. The finger of God, that hath settled in his soul the dread of his holy name, banishes all other apprehensions, Psa. cxii. He is like mount Sion, that cannot be moved : he fears no ill report ; his soul is firmly fixed upon God ; in the midst of his greatest dangers,

gers, and violent storms, he saith with David, "The Lord is my light and my deliverance ; of whom should I be afraid ? the Lord is the strength of my life ; whom then shall I fear ? O God, thou art a buckler round about me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I have laid myself down, I have slept, and I have awaked ; for the Lord upholds me. I will not fear thousands of people, when they shall set themselves round about against me ; when a whole army shall encamp against me, my heart would never fear," *Psa. xvii.*

42. Let the wicked be never so great and honourable, and be never so highly advanced in the world, their fame shall perish eternally. It is to no purpose that they rear up stately trophies, and fill whole volumes with the remarkable passages of their lives, making the marbles to publish their praises for whatsoever they do, and to render their glory eternal ; their name shall be always abominable to God, and all his holy angels ; and mankind shall never remember it but with curses and detestation. These infamous persons are like a stinking lamp, that gives light for a time ; but when it is put out, it yields a most odious stink. They may be also compared to certain devils, that never go out of a place without leaving an ill scent behind them.

43. It is not so with good men ; their fame shall flourish for ever ; and, like the palm, the more men press it down, the more it rises. Their name is engraven in the highest heaven, in the glorious temple of eternity, and it shall always be blessed by God and the angels of his glory. The example of Christian virtues shall remain after them for a model to their posterity to imitate. A faithful Christian, whose soul is sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, is like the alabaster box of ointment, which, when it was broken and spilt upon our Saviour's head, was a precious liquor that perfumed all the room ; for such an one lives after his death. When his
body

body is broken and reduced to ashes, his good name spreads abroad to the glory of God, and the edification of his church. Mary Magdalen's perfume filled only the chamber where they were sitting, and was soon spent ; but the sweet perfume of an innocent and holy life, fills both heaven and earth with a grateful scent, and continues for ever and ever.

44. I judge that another powerful means to withdraw us from vice, and to induce us to virtue, is, to represent to ourselves, at every moment, the excellency and dignity of our calling; to take delight in beholding, with the spiritual eyes, the white stone where our new name is written, which none knows but he who receives it. It is the noble and high quality of the children of God, and of believers, which he bestows upon none, but upon such whom he hath elected from all eternity, for the eternal enjoyment of bliss in his glorious kingdom. It is reported of a certain young prince, that when he had a design to disgrace himself by lustful actions and debauchery, a wise philosopher reclaimed him from his wicked purpose, by telling him, "Remember that thou art a king's son." Thus you, Christian souls, when Satan, the flesh, and the world, shall tempt you to filthy and unjust actions, or to any other sin, call to your mind that you are the children of the King of kings. Take great heed you defile not such a precious crown; and as our Saviour said to him who should have followed him, but was desirous first to go and bury his father, "Suffer the dead to bury the dead;" likewise we say unto you, devout souls, who have freely consecrated yourselves unto God, to his service and worship, Cast away these vain and base actions, and all these dead works; leave them to such as are dead in their trespasses and sins. But for you, behave yourselves according to your celestial calling, apply yourselves to righteousness and holiness, and to the practice of all other virtues, as such who were dead, but now are risen to life.

45. We

45. We must continually meditate upon the holiness and purity of our future abode in heaven, and the expectation that we have there, Rom. vi. For as Jesus Christ is gone to prepare a place for us in the house of his heavenly Father, John xiv. it is but just and reasonable that we should fit and prepare our souls for such holy and glorious mansions, Rev. xxi. It is not possible to go to heaven by treading in the paths of hell. Nothing impure nor filthy shall enter into the holy city, the new Jerusalem. As in Solomon's temple there was no way to the holy of holies, but through the sanctuary ; thus, if we will one day enter into the heavenly sanctuary where Christ doth dwell, the true ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat, Eph. ii. it is absolutely necessary that we should tread in the path of good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them, Tit. ii. It is upon this consideration that St. Paul grounds the exhortation to piety and Christian virtues ; " The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Seeing that we have such promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filth of the flesh and spirit, finishing our sanctification in the fear of God," 1 Cor. vii. St. John makes use of the same reason, to persuade to holiness, " Beloved, we are now the children of God ; but what we shall be doth not yet appear : now we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is ; and whosoever hath this hope in him, let him purify himself as he is pure," 1 John ii. The apostle St. Peter employs the same consideration to kindle in our hearts this pure and celestial fire : " We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Wherefore,

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless," 2 Pet. iii.

46. You know, Christians, that God created our first parents after his own image and likeness, before he brought them into his terrestrial paradise. There is great reason that this divine image should be reprinted in our souls, before we enter into the celestial paradise. Unto this the apostle has a regard, when he tells the Ephesians, "Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, created according to God in righteousness and holiness," chap. iv.

47. If the place of our future abode, unto which we are designed, requires from us sanctification, the quality of the persons with whom we shall spend an eternity, doth no less oblige to the same behaviour; for they shall be angels of light, and the blessed saints, who have washed and whitened their robes in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. v. is a glorious church that hath neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, Rev. v. It is the spouse of the Son of God, clothed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, Rev. xix. St. Paul had this same consideration, when he saith, "That we are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and that our conversation ought to be as becometh citizens of heaven." To wean us from the filthy deeds of the flesh, and from the profane disposition of Esau, he employs the same reason to persuade us, in Heb. x. "You are come (saith he) to mount Sion, to the city of the living God, the celestial Jerusalem, to the thousands of angels, and to the assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

48. As the child in its mother's womb begins to live there the same life that it leads when it is come into the world; so
likewise

likewise a Christian ought to begin to live in the same manner upon earth, as he hopes to live for ever in heaven. If we will live and reign with Christ above in his kingdom, we must at present have him live and reign in our hearts here below by faith.

49. The chief happiness of man consists not only in the true knowledge of God, and of him whom he hath sent to save us, or in the spiritual peace, or celestial transports of the Holy Spirit ; but it consists in holiness, without which none shall see God, Job xvii. Rom. v. Therefore the apostle inquires of the Romans of his time, "What fruit had you in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? But now being free from sin, and become the servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," Heb. xii. Rom. ix.

50. I find also that this is a very good remedy to keep yourselves free from the debaucheries and corruptions of the age ; to abstain from the company and acquaintance of vicious persons : for as he who touched things unclean, became thereby unclean ; and as such as haunt among the sick of a plague are infected with their disease ; likewise it is the property of evil company to corrupt the best manners, 2 Cor. xv.

51. Whereas we should earnestly covet the acquaintance of good men, and delight in the society of such, who, like seraphim, excite and inflame one another to glorify God, and sing forth his praises ; we must frequent such whom we desire to resemble : for as Jacob's sheep brought forth lambs, spotted and marked, as the rod upon which they cast their eyes ; thus, if we had our eyes fixed upon the holy examples of piety and virtue, we should see ourselves insensibly transformed into their image and resemblance. We ought to take pleasure in their company, with whom we hope to live for ever in the highest heavens.

52. The most powerful and most effectual motive to oblige us to the practice of piety and holiness, and purity of life, is to look with the eye of faith upon Him who is invisible, and to represent to ourselves the great world as a large temple where he dwells. Let the voice that Moses heard out of the burning bush sound continually in our ears and in our mind; "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground," *Exod. iii.* Cast off there thy base and earthly affections, and renounce thy sottish and filthy lusts; for thou art always before my eyes, that are too clean and pure to suffer the sight of evil; and the place where thou standest is sanctified by my presence, *Heb. i.* Remember, that I see thine heart, that I search thy reins, and that I read thy most secret thoughts, *Rev. ii.* Christian souls, imagine that God calls unto you from heaven continually, as he did unto Abraham, "Walk before me, and be perfect," *Gen. xvii.* Let therefore the dread of this divine Majesty seize upon thee and possess thee. When Potiphar's wife tempted chaste Joseph to defile himself with adultery, she perceived nothing in the room but this object of her lust; but this holy man saw the glorious Godhead between him and this lascivious woman. He perceived God's eye, that penetrates into the greatest depths. This drew from him this expression, "How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God!" Thus, if our flesh tempt us, and if the vicious and profane incite us into secret and shameful retreats, to share in their filthy crimes, let us then remember, that God is every where; and wheresoever we hide ourselves, God hath an ear to hear us, an eye to see us, and an hand to record all our deeds, words, and thoughts. God is all ear, all eye, and all hand. He discovers us as easily under the dark shadows of the night, as at break of day. He spies us through our fig leaves, and beholds us under our most subtle disguises. He understands our most inward thoughts, and listens to the silent language of our hearts. He searcheth into all the closets of our souls,

and into the foldings and windings in our consciences. In a word, all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. An ancient philosopher persuadeth such as desire to be virtuous, to choose some grave and virtuous person for their example, to represent him always in their presence, and to live as in his sight, [Seneca.] We need not represent to ourselves imaginary appearances; for in every place where we are, and whatever we do or think, we are always in the sight of the Holy of holies, who is both our witness and our judge. It was David's meditation, when he cried out, "O Lord, whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I go from thy presence? If I mount up to heaven, thou art there: If I go down into the pit, thou art there also: if I take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, there shall thine hand guide me, and thy right hand uphold me. If I say, The darkness shall cover me, behold, the night shall be like light round about me; darkness shall not hide me from thee, and the night shall shine as the day; the night and the day are to thee alike."

53. If the devil and the world have ensnared us in their nets, and if we have been unhappily lulled asleep in the bosom of some deceitful pleasure; this consideration alone, that God sees and understands us, is able to awake us with an holy dread and fear. Let therefore the words of St. Paul sound continually in our ears, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee; or "Awake to righteousness, and sin not," Eph. v. 1 Cor. xv. Truly, if we be not stupified and besotted above measure, this dreadful voice that God thunders from heaven, is able, not only to awake us from the sleep of iniquity, but also to oblige us to cry out with Jacob, "God is here, and I knew it not! O how dreadful is this place! It is the house of God, it is the gate of heaven," Gen. xxviii. As soon as Peter had taken notice of our Saviour's look, that he cast upon him, he
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went out of the high-priest's hall, and wept bitterly for his apostacy. Thus if we could but perceive and acknowledge that God casts his eyes continually upon us, we should repent of our vices, and our hearts would quickly melt in tears of contrition.

54. They who have a powerful and malicious enemy to watch over them, and to catch at something to accuse them before the judge, that they may be condemned, are always upon their guard; and nothing is able to induce them to utter a word, or commit an action, that may give an advantage. No enemy is more powerful and malicious than Satan, who continually eyes us, that he may accuse us before God, and draw us into hell. For that reason he is named, Rev. xii. "The accuser of the brethren, who accuseth them before God day and night." It is probable he registers all our idle words, and wicked deeds, to produce them before God's throne, when the books shall be opened, and he shall render unto every one according to his works. Take heed therefore, Christians, of this dreadful accuser, of this mortal enemy of your salvation. Give him not cause to rejoice at your ruin, or to triumph at the loss of your souls. To this the apostle exhorts us, Eph. iv. "Give no place to the devil."

55. And because it is sometimes necessary to restrain ourselves with an holy awe, and to withdraw ourselves out of lust as out of the fire; you religious souls, keep always in your mind a short account of the judgments of God, that have been inflicted from time to time upon all manner of sinners. Consider how God dealt with the heavenly spirits, who did not keep their original purity; they are reserved for utter darkness, and for eternal chains, until the great day of judgment; and say unto yourselves, If God hath not spared the apostate angels, will he spare man, that rebels against him, and offends him with delight? Remember the dreadful fall

fall of our first parents, who, although they had been fashioned with God's own hand, and instructed by him, have lost both themselves and their posterity, by listening to the deceitful suggestions of the old serpent. Cast your thoughts upon the first wicked world, which was destroyed by a deluge ; and upon the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, upon whom fell the fire and brimstone of God's hot displeasure. Look upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, overwhelmed with all their pride, in the waves of the Red Sea. Consider the three thousand that were killed with the Levites' sword, because of the idolatry of the golden calf ; and the four and twenty thousand, whom a sudden death swept away, because they went a-whoring after Baal-Peor. Look with fear upon the burning serpents in the wilderness, that cast their poison upon the murmurers against God, and their superiors ; upon the earth that opened its mouth to swallow Corah, Dathan, and Abiram ; upon those heavenly flames that consumed Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire unto the Lord ; upon the bears who went out of the forest to devour two and forty young rascals who mocked Elisha ; upon the lion that devoured the prophet that disobeyed God's command, and hearkened to a lying brother. In short, cast your eyes with astonishment upon Nebuchadnezzar feeding among the beasts of the field, Jezebel eaten up by dogs, Herod consumed with worms, and the rich miser burning in the flames of hell, Dan. iv. 2 Kings-ix. Acts xii. Luke xvi.

56. Above all things, think upon the last judgment, and consider this last day, in which we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive in our bodies that which we shall have done, whether it be good or evil. Remember, that in this dreadful day God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, the secret contrivances and thoughts of the heart. Before this throne of fire the books shall be opened ; not only God's books, where all our sins and impieties are

are registered, but also the books of our consciences, where the frightful image of all our crimes shall appear. In the day of his glorious coming the heavens shall melt, the elements shall be dissolved, the earth and all its works shall be burnt with fire, and every man shall give an account of every idle word ; how much more of every wicked action and profane discourse ! Matt. v. 12.

57. That we may not be confounded nor ashamed in the dismal day, in which God will judge the world by the Man whom he hath ordained ; let us be inwardly persuaded that it is not sufficient to abstain from outward sins, but we must also hate and inwardly abhor them, Acts xvii. For as the leopard in chains leaves not his skin nor his spots, and changes not, for all his restraint, his rapacious and cruel nature, for he continues still a leopard ; and as a thief in fetters, shut up in a dungeon, remains a thief in his heart ; likewise such as abstain from exterior sins only for fear of man and the severity of the laws, are nevertheless esteemed vicious and abominable in the sight of God and of his holy angels, if every time that he thinks upon his crimes, he is not moved with a true contrition, and abhors them with all his heart. The best means to render our conscience whole, is, to tear it in pieces with the sorrow of repentance.

**58. It is not sufficient to abstain from thoughts, words, and actions, that God prohibits ; but we must also apply ourselves to the study of true piety, of virtue, and generally to all the good works that God requires : for as the praise and honour of a good bowman is never bestowed upon one who hath only the skill of not breaking his bow, his arrows, and his quiver, but to him who strikes the mark, and aims well ; and as he is not able to become a good artist, who works not ill, because he doth nothing at all ; but he who works well, and shews excellent pieces of workmanship : likewise he is not to pass
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for a good and religious Christian, who only abstains from evil, and commits no outward sins ; but he that doeth good, and applies himself to virtue. Every tree that bringeth not forth fruit, although it bear no evil fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire, Matt. ii. Our Saviour cursed the fig-tree, not because it brought forth evil fruit, but because it brought forth no good fruit, but was altogether barren. The wicked servant was cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, not because he had lost or mis-spent his talent, but because he had not employed it well, and turned it to his Lord's advantage, Matt. xxv. Not only such shall be condemned to the flames prepared for the devil and his angels, who inflict God's children on earth, and spill the blood of his servants ; but such as have not clothed his members, visited and comforted them, and given them to eat and drink. In short, if you inquire from the rich miser, how he comes to be condemned to hell, or tortured in the flames, he will not tell you, it was because he took what was not his own, or because he committed murders, violences, and other horrid deeds, but he lived without charity, and had not pity on the poor.

59. And as God requires that we should proceed daily forward, until we come to the measure of the perfect stature in our Lord Jesus Christ, we must very frequently take a view of our former life, and feel the pulse of our lusts, to see whether they be not more fervent and violent than before, whether the old man continues to decline, and how much we have gained upon our wicked affections, and reformed our corrupt dispositions : for as those that swim against the stream, if they slack but a little, are carried downwards by the violence of the current ; likewise if we employ not all our strength to swim up to our heavenly source, integrity and perfection, the torrent of our lusts and of evil customs will force us down into the deep abyss of death and eternal destruction.

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We must therefore examine, every day, what progress we have made in piety and holiness ; and whether, since so many years that God speaks to us, and instructs us to discover what is pleasing to him, if we have more piety, zeal, and charity, and more holiness, than before : we must imitate the solicitous care of such as have transplanted some rare plant of the East into this northern climate ; they have always their eye upon it, to take notice of every thing that happens to it. We must propose for our example a steward, having a great account to make up, who looks often on his memorials and registers. An Heathen philosopher was highly praised, because he never laid himself down to sleep, until he had well examined what progress he had made in philosophy and moral virtue : likewise a good Christian should never cast himself upon his bed to sleep at night, until he hath seriously considered how he hath proceeded forward in piety and the love of God. In a word, a true Christian by this means shall never be less alone than when he is alone ; for then he shall entertain himself with his God, and shall discover unto him his heart, and his most secret thoughts. 'Then he shall speak seriously unto his soul, and shall examine exactly his conscience. Then he will look to his wicked deeds, to weep and lament for them with tears of sincere repentance. Then he will cast himself upon the infinite mercy and goodness of God, to embrace it with a lively faith and assurance. 'Then he will make a reflection upon God's commands, to walk in them with an holy zeal and earnestness all the days of his life.

60. Amongst the directions that I intend to give him that desires to apply himself to the practice of piety, and to abandon vice, I must not forget this advice, that he must never satisfy his carnal lusts and pleasures, but he should rather check and bridle them ; for when we grant them what they crave, we are so far from extinguishing these feverish flames, and satisfying these hellish longings, that we do but increase
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and encourage them the more. As he that loves money is not satisfied with money, and as the ambitious is never exalted high enough in honour ; thus the lustful worldling is never contented with the fullest enjoyment of carnal pleasures. It is a fire that kindles another, and a flame that never saith, " It is enough." These filthy lusts are like the serpent that stings the bosom of the person who warms it in his breast ; or as the furnace of Babylon, that burnt up those who first kindled it : so such as entertain the flames of their fleshly lusts, keep in their bosoms a fire, that will at last burn and totally consume them.

61. We must resist the first motions of the flesh with the shield of faith ; extinguish the first inflamed darts of the devil : for it is very easy to put out the first sparkle of an increasing fire ; but if we neglect to cherish it, it may come to be a fearful burning. And as we can without pain pluck up with one hand a young tree planted but a few days ; but if we suffer it to take root and to get strength, we should not be able to pull it with both hands ; but must be forced to employ the axe, the wedge, and the saw : likewise, if we resist sin in its beginning, we shall easily overcome and tame it ; we shall extinguish without difficulty these first beginnings of a strange fire, and we shall pluck up with ease this bitter plant that will grow up to our sorrow. But if we suffer this infernal fire of lust to increase, all the water of the sea will not be able to extinguish it ; and if we give leave to this cursed plant to grow, it will never be plucked up without much sweat and labour. Sin never begins as it ends, and discovers not all its poison at once. As the child in its mother's womb is not made in an instant ; thus this monster of Satan is formed by degrees ; one chain of hell is linked into another. When lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin. From the thoughts proceed the suggestion ; and from the suggestion, pleasure and delight ; and from delight, consent ; and after delight follows

follows the deed, which begets the habit. From thence the sinner proceeds to be hardened in a custom of sin. Thus the devil aggravates his tyrannical yoke, and strengthens the chain by which he drags us into eternal damnation.

62. As among the planets there is always one that ruleth and causeth his influence to be felt upon earth more than the rest; thus, among sins and lusts, there is always some one or other that sways in us, unto which we are more addicted than the rest: this therefore we must chiefly take heed of. Here we ought to discover our strength and industry, for fear that the devil should employ it as a means to enter into our souls, and establish there his tyranny. We must imitate the wise valiant captains, who having a place to defend against a vigilant and an active enemy, fortify the places that are naturally the weakest, and furnish them with the best soldiers, causing there a watchful and continual guard to be kept. Christian souls, be sure you take all the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having overcome all, that you may continue stedfast, Eph. iv.

63. We ought not to neglect any sin, nor imagine that there are some light and inconsiderable ones that God regards not; for a little leaven seasons and leavens the whole lump, and the least dead fly corrupts and causeth several confections to bubble up and spoil. The least scratch may cause a feverish inflammation, and but a little poison can lay us in our graves. The devil cares not by what gates he enters into our souls, and by what tie he takes hold of our hearts. Thus the cursed serpent slides through the least and narrowest crannies and holes of the house, as well as through the widest gates. Christian souls, give no place to the devil, but shut your ears to all enchantments.

64. We must not only always eschew all manner of sins, and abstain from all appearance of evil ; but for our better security, that we may not endanger our salvation, we must take heed of all those things whereof our souls are doubtful, and about which our consciences cannot be satisfied. We must never do any thing, but we ought first to be fully persuaded, that it is acceptable to God, and agreeable with his holy will ; for, " whatsoever is done without faith is sin."

65. As they who intend to stop the current of a running water are wont to cut for it a new channel ; so if your vicious lusts and passions are too violent, you must divert them, and propose to yourselves new and fresh objects. Are you choleric ? Be angry, and sin not : fret and fume against your own sins and lusts, and crush in pieces these children of Belial. Are you oppressed with sadness and grief ? Let the causes of your sadness be your offences against God, and the scandals of his church. Are you furious and violent ? Remember to be of the number of those persons who take the kingdom of God by violence. Are you inclined to covetousness ? Covet and be greedy of the riches and treasures of heaven, *Matt. x.* Are you lifted up with ambitious thoughts ? Let your ambition's aim be to raise you upon the immortal throne, and to attain to the incorruptible crown of glory. Are you lustful, and given to your pleasures ? Labour to enjoy the divine and ravishing delights of the Holy Spirit, and meditate often upon the eternal pleasures that are reserved for you in heaven.

66. Devout souls, who sigh and groan for your infirmities, who labour to attain to perfection, apply yourselves to read and meditate upon God's holy word with a religious attention ; and before you enter into this holy lecture, say with the prophet David, " Lord, open mine eyes, and I shall see the wonders of thy law," *Psa. cxix.* Intreat your great God to open your hearts, as he did Lydia's, to receive this incorruptible

table seed of your regeneration, and that he may give you a filial obedience, Acts xvi. In such a case, as soon as you shall hear the Lord's voice, you will find your soul inflamed with his holy love, 1 Pet. i. When we only behold a beautiful countenance, we become not more beautiful thereby; nor do we take from it its excellent features, 2 Cor. iii. But it is otherwise with us, who behold, as in a glass openly, the glory of the Lord; we are transformed thereby into the same image of his glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

67. Take pleasure to meditate often upon God's wonderful works, and to sing forth his praises. The spiritual songs inspired by the Holy Ghost commonly appease all the evil motions of our mind, and beget in us an holy joy and celestial peace. As when Saul was tormented with a wicked spirit, David was appointed with his harp to play before him, and by that means quieted his troubled mind; likewise when hatred, anger, revenge, covetousness, ambition, or lust, or any other of the unruly passions, which are as so many evil spirits, disturb and torture our souls within us, we must seek a remedy from David's harp, and sing unto the Lord in spiritual songs and hymns.

68. We ought carefully to attend at the public exercise of devotion, and not leave off the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; for where there are but two or three met together in the name of Jesus Christ, he is there in the midst of them. St. Thomas, who was not with the apostles when Christ first appeared among them, lost the comfort then of seeing him risen from the dead. And if this merciful Redeemer had not had compassion on him, he had perished in his unbelief for ever. If upon the day of Pentecost any of the faithful had been found absent from the holy company of the faithful in Jerusalem, they had not seen the glorious appearance of the Holy Ghost. Who knows but in

a sermon that we have neglected, we have lost some pious advice, some seasonable exhortation, by which God might have brought our hearts to repentance? Who knows but, instead of the fire that devours us, we might have felt the holy flames kindled in us, like unto those flames of the burning bush, that would burn in us, and not consume us? Who knows but, at the breaking up of the assembly, we might have said, as the two disciples of Christ going to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us when he spake to us, and opened the scriptures?"

69. We must be fervent, zealous, and persevering in prayer, and other holy duties, and embrace our Lord and Saviour with the arms of faith and repentance, and say unto him as Jacob, "I will not leave thee until thou hast blessed me." Chiefly we ought to apply ourselves to these holy exercises, when we feel the inward and troublesomestrugglings of the flesh against the spirit. We should imitate the virtuous woman, who feeling two children stirring in her womb, fell to her prayers, and unburdened her sorrows in the bosom of her heavenly Father. And as St. Peter, when he began to sink, lifted up his hands and voice, "Lord, save me," Matt. xiv. likewise we, who walk upon this dangerous sea of the world, as soon as we find ourselves sinking into carnal delights, or as soon as the waves of vicious examples and dangerous customs overpower us, let us cry out from the bottom of our hearts, O merciful God, stretch out thine hand from above, and deliver me from these waters of hell, that carry me away; accomplish thy virtue in mine infirmities, and give me grace, in resisting against sin, to resist unto blood, Psa. lxxix. Heb. v. Let thine holy Spirit overcome mine; let heaven command the earth; and let paradise lead hell in triumph. If we make this petition with all our hearts, God will grant it from his holy sanctuary. He will extinguish the fire that burns us. He will shut the lion's mouth that is ready to devour us. He will

will appease the winds and storms, that the devils have raised in us; and at his first entrance into our ship, tossed up and down with fears and apprehensions, he will bring peace and a blessed tranquillity, and will lead us to the safe haven of eternal happiness. As Moses, when he had been familiar with God, came down from the mountain with a shining countenance; and as our Saviour, when he was in prayer upon Mount Tabor, was transfigured, his garments were white as the light, and his face appeared as glorious as the sun; likewise, if we lift up ourselves above all these earthly and corruptible things, and pray to God, with an holy earnestness and zeal, we shall see, that our souls shall be thereby clothed with holiness, and full of glory and light: they will be transformed into the blessed image of the great God, whom we adore; for as soon as we behold him, we shall become enlightened.

70. To the end we may tame this body, and that we may reduce it to obedience, and overcome all our wicked and dangerous lusts, Psa. lxxi. 12. it is necessary that we should add fasting to our prayers. We must not always expect a time appointed by the rulers of our church upon solemn occasions; but we must prescribe to ourselves a fast, according as we shall see it expedient and useful: for if this flesh be unruly and rebellious against God, and his holy laws; if ease and plenty encourage its impurities and insolence; let us deprive it of its food and dainties, labour to mortify it by fastings and abstinence, and remember what our Saviour Christ saith in the gospel, "that there are some evil spirits, that are not to be driven out but by fasting and prayer," Matt. xxvii.

71. If God gives us grace to overcome sin, and mortify our lusts by fervent and earnest prayers, by austere fastings, by the bitter tears of repentance, and by the assistance and blessing of his divine Spirit upon our devotions; take heed that ye become not careless and negligent in good works. Deceive

ceive not yourselves, religious souls, and be not surprised; for many times the old man looks as if he were dead, that we might not offer to strike him again to the heart, that he may recover more strength. There is always in the ashes something of that infernal fire, that is able to do much mischief. Lust is not rooted out so entirely, but that there remain some strings in our hearts that may grow again. This source of iniquity is not so dry but that it may run afresh. As during the time of peace, men prepare new armour for war, and exercise themselves at tilts and tournaments; likewise during the calm and rest of our souls, we must prepare some armour for our spiritual warfare. And as it is not sufficient to win a place by assault, and to drive out the enemy's forces, but we must also watch day and night, and keep a constant and a strong guard, that we may not be surprised and overcome; thus when we have forced out the devil, and banished him out of our hearts, we must be always upon our guard, and stop all the avenues, for fear that the evil spirit should come upon us, accompanied with seven worse spirits, and that our last condition should be worse than the first.

72. To these works of piety and devotion, in which we cannot always be employed, we must remember to add a lawful calling; for idleness is the mother of all vices: when we are doing nothing, the devil prompts us to evil. This befel David, a man after God's own heart, when he gave himself over, contrary to his former practice, to base idleness; whilst he was looking in his neighbour's house, the devil entered into his heart, and with the assistance of a filthy object, inflamed his soul with an unlawful lust. As the iron that is not used becomes rusty, as the standing water putrifies, and the earth that is not manured begets insects, and venomous serpents; likewise a soul that is not employed is soon covered over with the rust of vice. It is easily dragged along in the corruption of the age, and apt to beget and bring forth

forth monsters. Therefore the prophet Ezekiel examines the very beginning and the first spring of Sodom's sins, saying, "That it was the plenty of bread, ease, and idleness," Ezek. xvi. Christians, if you desire to keep your souls pure and undefiled, that the Holy Spirit may reign in them, give no entertainment to the devil : let him find you always well employed, and let him never see you at leisure to assault you with his hellish temptations, Eph. iv.

73. After all, we must seriously think upon death, and represent it always before our eyes : for as a pilot to govern and steer a ship, ought to be at the stern, and sit at the helm; so, to govern the course of this life as we ought, we must consider our latter end, live always as if we were ready to die, and to breathe forth the last gasp. Therefore this sentence is worthy to be engraven upon cedar in golden characters, "Whatever thou sayest, and whatever thou doest, remember thy latter end, and thou shalt never sin," Eccl. vii.

Wonder not, Christian souls, if in this treatise, where I am to furnish you with remedies against the fears of death, I would have death itself to be a remedy against sin ; for these things are united and linked together, or rather they hold one another by the hand : for as a good and holy life is a safe preparation to a happy death ; likewise death is a strong motive to oblige you to live well : for there is none, unless it be a brutish and desperate varlet, but at the hour of death laments at the consideration of his former wicked life, and grieves that he hath not applied himself to the fear of God, and to the practice of Christian virtues. If a malefactor, after he is condemned to die, and has heard the sentence of his doom, did mind nothing but drinking and playing, instead of prayer and repentance, by which such an one is to dispose himself to go to God, every one would wonder at him as at a monster and a madman : likewise, if we consider as we ought,

ought, that death is certain and unavoidable, that God hath pronounced the sentence in his anger, and that none shall be excepted, this will be able to recall us from vice, and persuade us to holiness, without which none shall see God, Heb. xii. Therefore at every moment, when Satan, the world, and our own flesh, entice us to any evil action, let us think within ourselves, Would I have death find and seize upon me in this employment ? Am I in a good disposition to go thus unto God, and to appear before his tribunal ? Jesus, the son of Sirach, had well considered this when he pronounced this excellent sentence, which I could wish were engraven in the soul of every Christian : " Remember thy latter end, and thou shalt not sin."

We must therefore live in the world without being guilty of its corruptions and abominations. As fish preserves its sweetness in the midst of the salt waves of the sea, and as sheep never learn to bark nor bite, though dogs be always with them; likewise though our conversation be in the world among the profane and vicious men of this age, we must not imitate their filthy words, their oaths, nor their blasphemies; and less reason have we to follow their wicked and abominable deeds: we must converse among them as Lot in the city of Sodom, as Joseph in Egypt, as Daniel in Babylon. Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; the second death shall have no power upon him.

When Jacob by God's command went to Bethel, he charged his wives, his children, and all that were with him, " Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise and go to Bethel," (Gen. xxxv.) And I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." Then they delivered into Jacob's hands all the strange gods that were in their possession,

sion, and hid them under an oak in Shechem. Thus, before you go to the true Bethel, to the dwelling where you shall eat your fill of the bread of the kingdom of heaven, before you offer unto God the sacrifice of your souls, you must, if you be true Christians, renounce sin, and all wicked lusts, which have been formerly your idols. I would advise you to bury them deep in this base earth. But you had better do as God commands you from heaven, "Trample under foot all these abominable vices, and all these worldly lusts, that are to you as so many false gods that you worship," Ezek. ii. "Put away from before me those idols of jealousy, that provoke me to jealousy; and sanctify the temple of my holiness." Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and sanctify yourselves, ye double-minded. Put off the old man with all his deeds, and put on the new man, created according to the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and then ye shall be admitted to the holy temple of my glory, to offer unto me, amongst the innumerable company of saints, the acceptable perfumes of praise and thanksgivings, James iv. Eph. iv.

This is a duty so just and necessary, that natural reason itself, not enlightened by grace, acknowledges it to be so: nay, the most wretched varlets are constrained to give glory to God, and to condemn themselves; they confess that they are indebted to the divine Majesty, but the payment of this debt they put off from day to day; and whenever you come to them, they are ready to require a delay; they acknowledge their faults, the heinousness of their crimes, and the necessity of repentance; but they are always putting off repentance and reformation of life. As when a sluggard is newly awakened out of his sleep, he desires "yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep," Prov. xxiv. Thus, whenever Death appears, the voluptuous are yet requesting to enjoy their carnal delights. When the Lord's messengers are calling upon us to repair the breaches that the devil hath

made in our souls, we could willingly answer, as the Jews did to the prophet, that "the time is not come that the Lord's house shall be built," Hag. i. The young man in his youth and strength is apt to say that it is not yet time to busy himself about wisdom and reformation; and that when he comes to be old, he will then repent of the sins of his youth. And the old man endeavours to put off his repentance until the hour of his departure. He then expects to make a general confession of all his crimes, to satisfy all his neighbours, and to restore what he possesseth unjustly. In short, all men generally flatter themselves in their evil courses; and most are so extravagant, as to be persuaded, that when they have lived in sin and iniquity all their lives, mis-spent God's blessing, abused his mercies, a tear or a sigh, at the time of our death, will make a sufficient amends for all; and that he will be fully satisfied, if we may say then, as the prodigal child, "My Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee," or, as the good thief, "Lord, remember me," Luke xxiii. 42.

I have much to say against so great a mistake, so dangerous and profane a persuasion. First, What reason have we to believe, that God will accept our repentance, when we cannot endure to accept of his grace and redemption; that he will hear our sighs, and grant our prayers, when we will by no means give ear to his voice, nor obey the commands that he sends us of repenting?

Wretched man! dost thou stay to glorify God till the moment when thy breath shall fail thee? Is it just that thou shouldest then begin to serve him, when thou shalt be able to serve and please thy flesh no longer, nor satisfy thy foolish lusts?

This great God, who had commanded, during the shadows and types of Moses's law, that the children of Israel should offer

offer unto him their first-born, and the first-fruits of their inheritance, will he take it well now, in this admirable sunshine of the gospel, that thou shouldest offer to the devil, and to the world, the first-fruits of thy youth, the strength of thy years, and that thou shouldst reserve for him only the dregs and corruption of a decaying old age ?

It is to mock God and man, to dream of living well, when our life is far spent and gone ; to lift up our eyes and thoughts to heaven, when the earth fails us under our feet ; to restore other men's goods, when we can keep them no longer ; to renounce all desires of revenge, when we have no power of acting ; to abstain from the foul lusts of the flesh, when we are able to continue in them no longer ; to abhor theft, usury, rapine, and extortion, when a coffin is preparing to receive us, and Death looks us in the face. Such persons cannot be said to leave sin, but sin leaves them, as the ravens leave the tree that falls down with age, or that is struck with the thunder.

By our unreasonable delays, evil and sin grow older, and the cure becomes every day more difficult : for the more thou shalt be hardened in thy corruption, and confirmed in thy sins, the harder it will be for thee to break and melt thy corrupted heart. The deeper lust shall have cast its roots in thy soul, the more labour thou shalt find in plucking them out. In short, he that gives too much liberty to his unlawful affections, makes his vices by custom become natural, and cannot be converted without a great miracle.

Man's most important and difficult affair in the world, is his conversion to God. Therefore it is a great folly to put it off to such a time as we shall be in the feeblest and weakest condition ; to a time when we shall have most business to do and most trouble. Doubtless he orders not his affairs well,
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who puts off his praying to God, and his thoughts of heaven, until he comes to be stretched on his death-bed, for then we know not to whom we are first to answer. An account of our worldly concerns is then required from us ; we are then to make our last will and testament ; we call for a scrivener, and are inwardly vexed to behold him ; the visits of friends trouble us, and their absence doth much displease us ; pain seizes upon us ; defluxions are ready to choke us ; fevers burn us, and disturb our minds ; physicians oppress us with noisome remedies ; the noise is a trouble to us, and silence is suspected ; our parents and friends torment us with their officious dealings ; our children and our greatest darlings melt our hearts, and their tears force us to weep. But the worst is, the devils are then most busy and active. These hellish fiends, like devouring ravens, fly about us, endeavouring to fright us. In short, it is then the prince of the power of the air stirs up against us furious storms and tempests, to cause us to perish in the very haven. In the midst of so many disturbances, and so many powerful waves, it is a difficult task to possess our souls in peace, to think upon our consciences, to hear God speaking to us, to prepare for death as we ought, and to keep ourselves from sinking, and from being swallowed up with its apprehensions and frights.

Old age hath infirmities enow ; we need not defile it with youthful sins and lusts : for many times it causeth more wounds in our souls, than there are wrinkles upon our skin. When the body decays and grows weak, the lusts of the flesh become stronger ; and oft-times, when it whitens the face, it spots the conscience. In a word, the bones of old age are weak enough, and sufficiently full of pain, that we need not overburden them with the sins committed in the flower and strength of our age.

Moreover, we know not when nor how Death will assault
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us, nor what favour we are to expect from it. Who knows but that it intends not to give us the liberty of speaking to our friends, nor of thinking upon our souls? For it sends not always a warning to us, as to the good king Hezekiah, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die," 2 Kings xx. For as we have already taken notice, it surpriseth us in every age, in every time and place, and in the midst of all manner of employments. Old Eli fell down backward, and brake his neck, when he heard the unhappy news of the taking of the ark, and the death of his sons. Job's children dreamed of nothing but of solacing and delighting themselves in their feasts and jollity, when the house where they were fell down, and buried them in its ruins. But besides these unhappy accidents, how many are there whose mouth Death closed on a sudden, without suffering them to speak a word! How many are there in the world, who are thought to be in perfect health, and yet suddenly fall into an apoplexy, and into other quick diseases, so that they are to be found sooner dead, than thought to be sick!

Besides, though we should have greater strength and vigour, so that we might foresee the time of our departure drawing near, repentance is not at our command; it is given us from above, and a special favour of the Holy Spirit. God works not a miracle every day; he changeth not at every moment rocks into springs of water, nor stones into rivers of oil; he grants not the favour to all sinners, hardened in their lusts, and confirmed in their apostasy from him, to be converted, and to be washed with the tears of repentance.

If thou seest a thief repenting at the time of his suffering, it is a particular example, that abolishes not the general rule. By this man God intends to comfort sinners who truly repent at the end of their days, and to assure them, that the arms of his mercy are always open to receive them into his favour. I

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confess, that true repentance can never be too late ; but I affirm, that it can never be too soon. It is most certain, that at any time the sinner repents, God will shew him mercy ; but that moment is not in our power. For one sinner that repents at the hour of death, there are thousands that depart in impenitency. And to set no other example but that which mount Calvary offers to us ; if thou seest on one side of Christ a thief converted and believing, look on the other side, and thou shalt perceive a wretch, who having spent his days in wickedness and impiety, expires in his sins, belching forth grievous blasphemies and reproaches against the King of glory : so that if one of these remarkable passages flatter thee, and lulls thy conscience asleep, the other should move and awaken thee with an holy fear. Moreover, the thief was converted at the first moment, and Christ called and invited him. Therefore, that you now hear the voice of God calling, harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation, for fear that God should swear in his anger that you shall never enter into his rest. Now, at this very instant that you read this, turn unto God with all your heart, and he will have pity and compassion upon you.

When the opportunity is once lost, it is not easily and at all times recovered ; therefore painters have represented Occasion with a great tuft of hair on the forehead, and all bald behind ; but unto every thing there is a season. God hath vouchsafed unto us a time, and reserved another for himself. Our time is when we are invited to repentance ; but God's time is when he manifests and declares his justice and judgments. During the space of one hundred and twenty years, Noah, an herald of righteousness, preached repentance to the old world ; this was their time : but when God's abused patience was justly provoked, it turned into fury. Then he sent a fearful deluge, that covered all the face of the earth ; this was God's time, and the day of his just vengeance.—

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When Lot spake to his sons-in-law to persuade them to go out of Sodom, this was the time of their salvation and deliverance : but when fire and brimstone overwhelmed and burned them alive, their crying and gnashing of teeth were as useless as their laughter and mocking had been formerly unjust. When Esau sold the privilege of his birthright, it was the time of thinking seriously upon the true and heavenly blessing : but when he had sold it for a sup of pottage, all his tears and weepings were as fruitless, as his gluttony had been insatiable, and his temper profane. When the Bridegroom in the Canticles was at the door with the dew of his heavenly joys, and myrrh of his eternal comforts, it was the bride's time, and the occasion that was offered her to enjoy the heavenly delight : but when she had delayed awhile, unwilling to rise from her bed, and put on her coat, he was gone, and it was to no purpose that she sought him about the city ; for instead of meeting with the embraces of her beloved, she finds her enemies that beat and wounded her. When poor Lazarus begged his bread at the rich man's gate, it was the time when this unmerciful man should have repented, and shewed mercy to the poor : but when in hell, burning in the flames, it was in vain that he lifted up his eyes to heaven to seek for some comfort. When our Saviour exhorted the Jews to believe in him ; when he wept so bitterly over Jerusalem, that had killed the prophets ; it was the time and opportunity of this unhappy nation, it was the time of their salvation, and of God's blessings : but when they had obstinately rejected this great God and Saviour, and desired that his blood might be upon them and their children, God cast them away from him, and they became a scorn and a reproach among all the nations of the earth. Finally, as it is to no purpose that a malefactor resolves to amend his life, when the judge is at the door, and when the serjeants have caught him by the throat, or when he is upon the gallows, ready to be strangled and executed ; likewise it is too late to
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begin to think upon God when Death seizes upon us, and Hell opens its jaws to swallow us. Miserable wretch! why despisest thou the riches of God's goodness and patience, and of his long-suffering, not considering that the goodness of God invites thee to repentance? But by the hardness of thine heart, that is without repentance, thou "treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who shall render unto every man according to his works," Rom. ii.

Certainly our salvation is a matter too important to be neglected, our life too uncertain to delay it till the next day, and our soul too precious to run the hazard of losing it. If we had many, we might venture the loss of one; but seeing that we have but one only, and that, if it be lost, all the riches and treasures of the world cannot redeem it, we should be moved with an holy fear of so great a loss, and decline whatsoever might cast this our precious soul into the second death and eternal damnation.

It is our Lord and Saviour's exhortation, "Watch, (saith he,) for ye know not the hour when the Lord is to come: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," Matt. xiv. Mark x. Luke xxii. This advice was so necessary, that he doth often repeat it; "Take heed to yourselves, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time shall be. Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be overcharged with gluttony and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and that day surprise you unawares; for as a thief it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man," Matt. xiii. Luke xxi.

To awaken us to move from our spiritual drowsiness and profane sleep, our Saviour brings this example of the wicked servant, who said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," Matt. xxiv. And therefore he began to beat his fellow-servants, to eat, drink, and be drunk. Our Saviour adds, that the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not expected; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matt. xxiv. The parable of the foolish virgins had the same drift: they being fallen asleep without any oil in their lamps, were so surprised at the bridegroom's coming, that they could not be admitted into the marriage chamber; it was in vain that they beat at the gate, with a "Lord, lord, open unto us," Matt. xxv. The door could not be opened unto them; but it was answered from within, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

It is certain the chief and principal purpose of this and other parables is, to teach us how we should be prepared to expect the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; but they may very well be applied to death: for it hath pleased God to keep secret and hidden the day in which he will call us to himself, and that of our Saviour's coming to judgment, that we may be equally prepared, and disposed, for the one as well as for the other. As we shall be found at the time of our death, so shall we be judged at the great day, when Christ shall come down from heaven with the angels of his power; and from that judgment there shall be no appeal. Let us therefore put off the sin that doth so easily beset us, and break all the chains of our filthy lusts. Let us disarm Death, and take from it its venomous darts, and its piercing stings. Let us pluck off the claws and the teeth of this furious beast, and extinguish all its fires, and it shall never be able to terrify us. Let us live the life of saints, and God

will give us grace to die the death of the righteous, and to end like them. Let us live as we would at the instant when death is upon our lips. Let us live as if at every moment we were to die, and as if God were calling to us, "Come and appear to judgment."

And when Satan, the world, and our own flesh, solicit and draw us to evil, let us say within ourselves, Is it thus that thou wilt reward the Lord thy God, and acknowledge all the blessings and favours that thou hast received from his bountiful hands? O fool, dost thou conceive that thou canst go to heaven by marching the road to hell? If thou dost wilfully cast thyself away into the depths of sin, what assurance hast thou of rising again by repentance? If thou forsakest God, art thou not afraid God will forsake thee? Is it thus thou preparest thyself to die? Are these lusts the arms wherewith thou must encounter Death? Art thou ready to draw near to the sacred majesty of thy God, and to appear before his great tribunal? The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light, Rom. x. Let us live as children of God, and heirs of his kingdom, Phil. iii. Let us be blameless, and shine as lights in the world. Let our conversation be as citizens of heaven, from whence we expect the Lord Jesus, Eph. ii. Let us go to the heavenly and holy Jerusalem, by the way of good works, which God hath prepared, that we might walk in them, Zech. xiii. In all our actions, words, and thoughts, let there be engraven "Holiness to the Lord." Let us discover by our deeds, that we really believe, without doubting, whatsoever the holy scripture declares of the eternal pains of hell, and of the unspeakable joys of heaven, Gal. vi. Whilst we have time, let us do good to all, but chiefly to the household of faith, Eph. v. Let us redeem the time, for the days are evil. Follow not Adam's example, who to eat of the fruit so pleasing to his taste, lost the

the paradise which God had given him. Let us not lose the eternal delights that God hath prepared for us from the beginning of the world, for a moment of carnal pleasure.

Let us imitate the holy and wise virgins, put oil in our lamps betimes; let us enrich our hearts with faith, hope, and charity, and put on the robes of righteousness and holiness. As God's faithful servants, let us labour to accomplish our task. Let us be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that when Death shall appear, or rather when the Prince of life shall call us to himself, we may be ready to give him an exact account of our talents, with which he hath entrusted us, that we may say unto him in sincerity and truth, "I have done the work that thou hast given me, I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." O most excellent Lord, I have nothing else to do, but to receive from thine hand the crown of righteousness which thou hast promised to all that love thine appearance; I have nothing else to do, but to enter into thy glorious rest, where thou dost embrace in thine infinite mercies all such as overcome sin and death, and keep thy word unto the end.



*A PRAYER and MEDITATION for one who prepares for Death,
by Repentance and an holy Life.*

SINCE sin hath brought Death into the world, and rendered this enemy so terrible to us, enable me, with thy divine virtue, to disarm it of its fiery darts and mortal poison. In regard thou hast prepared for me thine heavenly kingdom from the creation of the world, grant me grace to employ the residue of this life in purging my conscience from dead works, in studying the great business of sanctification,

tion, that I may be in readiness to enter into that abode of holiness, into which no impure thing can be admitted. O heavenly Father, discover to my soul, by the light of thine holy Spirit, the foolishness and deformity of sin, and its dreadful consequences; that I may abhor it as an universal monster, Satan's image, and a grievous pollution, that hath defaced in our souls the blessed features of thyself. Let me look upon it as a cursed burning, that hath kindled thy wrath, and will at last set on fire and consume this frame of the world. Let me look upon it as an intolerable burning, under which nature itself groans; and heaven complains of it as a public murderer of our first parents, of all mankind, and of the Lord of life. O that I may treat it as mine enemy, that hath provoked thy vengeance, and strives yet to cast me into eternal torments: make me sensible of the beauty of holiness, and the glory that shall crown it; that mine affections may embrace it as an invaluable jewel, taken from me by Satan, as an image and beam of thy perfections, and as that which shall make a principal part of our happiness in thy kingdom. O God of my salvation, thou seest my grief and inward trouble, to have so long assisted this tyrant sin, to destroy my soul, and to have neglected my chief business in the world, to serve and glorify thee. What shall I pretend as an excuse for myself? O my Sovereign Lord, I have sinned against thee, and committed abominable acts. But I repent in dust and ashes, and cannot but look back upon my evil deeds with horror. O God, who searchest the heart, thou knowest that my greatest grief proceeds from my not grieving sufficiently, and as mine iniquities have deserved. The number and greatness of my crimes are not hid from thee: and thou understandest what I ought to do, and to be, to obtain pardon. O Lord, I seek not the motive of it in myself, but in thine infinite mercy, that desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live. Turn me, O God, and grant me the grace of repentance. Thou art able to change
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this stony heart, and cause it to yield penitent tears: but rather give me, instead of this hard heart, another fashioned after thine own image; an heart that may be inflamed with love and zeal for thee. O my Redeemer, thou hast completed the work of my salvation, by spilling thine own blood to atone for us. Continue that good work in us. Sanctify my soul and body, and make me a new creature. Mortify this wicked flesh, with all its lusts, that the life I shall lead may be in imitation of the holy Jesus. Take possession of me by the direction and government of thy blessed Spirit, that I may detest and shun all appearances of evil, and the garments defiled with sin. O let the thoughts of death, thy holy fear, the misery of departing sinners, and the happiness of such as die in thy favour, be entertained continually in my mind, that I may renounce all impiety and worldly lusts, and finish my latter course in sobriety, justice, and religious duties. But chiefly, let charity influence my affections and actions; for such sacrifices are acceptable to thee. O merciful God, the great business of life is quickly finished; my days are but short, and I know not how soon thou wilt take me away. Assist me therefore in the performance of what thou requirest from me, and accomplish in me thy good work, that at thy coming I may not to be surprised or troubled, being diligently employed in thy service. O my gracious and heavenly Father, vouchsafe unto me all those divine qualifications needful to dispose me for thy eternal communion, and for the society of thy blessed saints, that are gone before me; that at my departure, my Saviour may receive and welcome my soul with a "Come good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

CHAP. XII.

The Sixth Remedy against the Fears of Death is, to repose ourselves upon God's good Providence.

SOME persons there are so brutish and stupid, that they never think upon the great end and design of their creation, and are not able to give a just account wherefore God hath put them into the world; carnal and earthly minds, who imagine that they were created for themselves, as brute beasts, only to eat and drink. Such are mentioned by St. Paul; their god is their belly, and their end is eternal misery. But there are also some wise and virtuous souls, that are continually meditating upon the favours they receive from heaven, which they employ to their right and proper use. Such celestial understandings, being enlightened from above, consider very well, that they are not born for themselves, but for their country, for their parents, for their friends, and chiefly to serve God and his church on earth. Therefore they desire to live only to glorify their Creator, and advance his kingdom.

When this good desire is well governed, it is acceptable to God, as a sweet smelling sacrifice. This was David's earnest desire, in Psa. cxix. "Let my soul live, that I may praise thee." This holy zeal forced so many bitter tears from king Hezekiah in his sickness, and caused him to intreat most earnestly to live yet longer in the world. This wise and religious prince well foresaw the fearful evils, the grievous confusion, and the abominable idolatry, that was likely to succeed after his death, in the kingdom of Judah. He was therefore very desirous to glorify God on earth, and to accomplish the reformation which he had begun. He desired so have children, whom he might teach to fear God with all their hearts, and to serve him according to his holy and divine will, that
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he might cause piety to continue in his house and royal family. He discovers this holy desire in his divine hymn, which he sung unto God, after his miraculous recovery : " Behold, for peace I had great bitterness, but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of destruction; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back ; for the grave cannot praise thee, (Isa. xxxviii.) Death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth : the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day, the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me, therefore will I sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of my life in the house of the Lord." We find the same earnest desire in St. Paul; for when he looks upon himself, and upon the miseries that attend him on earth, he lifts up his eyes to see the heavenly bliss that waiteth for him above; he desires to depart out of this earthly tabernacle, and to be with Christ, and acknowledgeth that it would be his great advantage. But when he looks upon the church of Christ, his desire of the salvation and instruction of his brethren causeth him to prefer their comfort to his own happiness and joy. " It is (saith he) more expedient for you that I remain in the flesh; and I know for certain, that I shall abide and remain with you for your advantage, and the joy of your faith."

This desire of life, with an intent of glorifying God, is good and holy : but it is no easy task to keep it within just and lawful bounds; for very often it becomes vicious, when it is stirred up by a fond love of our own persons, which makes us loth to die.

For example, when a great prince, animated with an heroic virtue, is engaged in a war for the preservation of his subjects, and for the delivery of many afflicted people from oppression and tyranny; if God blesseth his arms, and causeth his glorious designs to succeed, he will not be pleased, if
Death

Death at that instant offer to cross him, to break in pieces his victorious arm, to put an end to his conquests, and to cast his crown to the ground. He may justly complain in this manner : Must I now leave off such a notable and brave design ? Must I here stop in the midst of such a glorious race ? Must Death bury, with my body, the expectations of so many good men ? I am afraid that all my labours will vanish away with my breath. I have just cause to fear that my fall will draw after me the destruction of many poor people that depend upon me. I fear that oppression and tyranny will resume fresh spirits and a greater boldness, and prove for the future more grievous and insufferable. O cruel and inhuman Death ! by taking away my life thou bringest my friends to execution, and the arrows that thou stickest in my heart pierce the souls of many innocent people.

Likewise he that is promoted to be the king's vicegerent in a province, or to be a governor of a rich country, an important place, may be grieved, because Death snatcheth him away in the midst of his business, especially if it be in troublesome times, and if he sees none of a sufficient ability to succeed him. Must I, will such an one say, must I quit so soon this glorious employment ? must I so quickly leave my princely service, and forsake so many poor people, as a flock without a shepherd ? Death, how hateful and odious art thou ! thou delightest to bring all things into confusion and trouble.

Thus a brave general of a victorious army, who being full of courage manageth a successful war for the honour of his prince, and the advantage of his country, cannot but complain against Death, when he comes to subdue him, before he hath totally subdued and overcome his enemies ; especially if the times be so unhappy that none is able to succeed him in that employment, he will be ready to break forth into complaints : Must I leave off so many glorious designs ? Must I forsake

my most faithful soldiers, and abandon them to the mercy of their enemies, or to the capricious humour of an unexperienced successor ? O Death ! full of envy ! wilt thou pluck out of my hands so soon this conquering sword, and cut off with one blow of thy scythe so many great expectations ? In the same manner he that sits in the most honourable seat of judicature, as a Judge, a President, or a Counsellor, or any other chief magistrate, will doubtless mourn if Death seizeth upon him in the flower of his age ; especially if he fears that after him corrupt men will succeed, who may be likened to whitened walls. Must I, will he say, leave so soon this noble office, in which I took so much delight ? O inconsiderate Death ! why dost thou not suffer me to wear my purple, until such time as I shall be weary to bear it ? Why dost thou not permit me to sit here upon this magnificent seat, until I tumble off with old age ?

Likewise a faithful minister of the gospel, when he perceives the work of the Lord to prosper in his hands, Satan falling from heaven by his means as lightning, and Dagon brought upon his face to the ground, may justly wonder at Death's approaches, and speak after this manner : Must I so soon quit the duties of this holy function, in which I took my greatest delight ? Must I break off from this sacred work, by which I advanced so happily the glory of God ? I am afraid, when I am gone, ravening wolves will enter into the Lord's flock, and a terrible night of ignorance will overshadow our posterity.

Thus a father of a family, who passionately loves his wife and his children, shall never see Death, but shall feel all his bowels move, and his heart tormented with grief. He will sigh out such expressions as these : Must I forsake a poor forlorn wife, swimming in tears ? Must I leave my tender-hearted parents, who found my life a comfort, and will find

my death an affliction? Must I abandon my dear children, whom I love as my soul, without a guide, and in danger of losing the small temporal means that I have provided for them; in danger also of being overcome by the vicious customs of the age, and enticed to idolatry and superstition?

That we may be able to govern this violent passion, that prevails so much upon our minds, we must labour betimes to bring ourselves to this: "to rest upon the good providence of our heavenly Father." Christian souls, meditate upon this excellent saying in Ps. xxxvii. "Leave thy ways to the Lord, and trust in him, and he will direct thee." And in Ps. lv. "Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee." Forget not also that blessed exhortation of St. Peter, "Cast all your care upon God, for he careth for you." Imprint also in your mind St. Paul's assertion, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Remember the noble resolution of that great apostle: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed; but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

Thou desirest to be instrumental in the service of God, and of the public. It is an excellent desire indeed, and praiseworthy: but it belongs to God to appoint the service that he intends to receive from thee. It belongs to him to prescribe to thee thy task, and to order thy bounds. He knows when he is to release thee from thy labour, and how long thou must fight. Is thine eye evil, because thy God is so good and gracious to shorten thy work and troubles? All such as follow cheerfully the banners of the Lord of Hosts, and never retreat without the command of the great General of heaven and earth, shall enjoy a blessed victory, and obtain the honour of the triumph; as well the novice and the fresh soldier, as the old and long-experienced. All such as labour
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faithfully in the Lord's vineyard, shall receive from him an eternal reward, as well he that continues but an hour, as the other that bears the heat and burden of the day. When thou shouldest have gone but a few steps in the paths of righteousness, thy God is so noble and liberal, that he will bestow upon thee an incorruptible crown of glory, as well as if thou hadst continued there many years.

Great princes, who yield to the King of kings a religious respect, and seek your greatest glory in the cross of Christ, submit yourselves altogether to the pleasure of your universal Monarch : For seeing the lives of all men are governed by his wise providence, he hath a particular regard and an high esteem of the lives of kings and princes, the sons of his right hand. Therefore, whilst it is expedient for his glory, and their salvation, that they should live upon earth, he placeth round about their sacred persons his holy angels, and encompasseth them with a wall of fire. Remember, that as soon as the king of Israel was seated upon the throne, God commanded him to take in hand the book of his law, and to read in it all the days of his life. Ask from him that wisdom and prudence that is requisite to govern such multitudes of people, and beseech him to grant unto you the strength and virtue that is necessary to bear so great a burden. Let the sword that he hath entrusted in your hands, be to do justice upon offenders, and to protect the guiltless. As you are living images of God's sovereign authority over his creatures, remember that you should also imitate his goodness and mercy. Follow the example of him who resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Live in such a manner, that your subjects may cherish and honour you as their common father, may obey and serve you as their lord, and may respect and fear you as their king. Suffer not your heart to be puffed up with pride, when you behold the large dominions that God hath put under your command, and the people that own you
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for their sovereign : But lift up your eyes to the spacious heavens, take a view of their vast extent, and see how the whole earth is inconsiderable in comparison of them ; and think upon God, before whom all nations are but as the smallest dust of a balance, and as a few drops of water. Consider well that your subjects are creatures that God hath made after his own likeness, and redeemed by the death of his Son, and that they are to reign with you for ever in heaven. Remember, that the more God has committed to your trust, the greater must be your reckoning, and that you must one day appear in person before his dreadful throne, without sceptre or crown, or as other wretched sinners, to implore his mercy. Search into yourselves, and examine what you are : your bodies are subject to wounds, infirmities, and diseases, as that of the meanest of your servants ; your souls are also moved with the same passions and lusts as theirs. In short, you are entered into the world in the same manner as the most miserable slave, and you shall go out of it again as he doth. So that if a crowd of flatterers sooth you up, as they did Herod, "The voice of a god, and not of a man," Acts xii. mind well what God speaks to you from heaven, "I have said that ye are gods, and the children of the most High ; nevertheless, you shall die as men, and you that are the chiefest shall fall as the rest," Ps. lxxii. During the time of your abode in the world, employ your blood, sweat, and all the strength and power that God hath put into your hands, for the good and advantage of your empire, and for the defence and preservation of your people, that are under your protection. And if, in the midst of your greatest and most flourishing prosperities, Death comes to give you a summons to depart, let fall the sceptre willingly, to join your hands together, and fall down and adore the King of the whole earth. Grieve not for the loss of worldly glory, that passeth away as lightning, or as a shadow ; for God promiseth another, that shall be more lasting than the light of the sun. If you can but overcome
Death

Death and yourselves, God will cause you to sit down upon another throne, and will bestow upon you a kingdom that will never be moved, Rev. iii. Heb. xiii.

Wise and religious princes, be not solicitous for the things that shall happen after your decease. He by whom kings reign and princes do justice, is able enough to enrich your successor with the graces and qualities that become a powerful prince. It may be that he will bestow upon him more glory and happiness than upon you. When king David had ended his mortal race, God took him into his rest. It seemed at first, that the loss of so good a prince could not be repaired; but God caused Solomon to sit upon his father's throne, and made him the wisest and the most happy monarch in the world. David did but remove God's ark, but Solomon built for him a stately and magnificent temple. David was a type of the encounters and victories of the Son of God, but Solomon represented his glorious triumphs, and that eternal peace with which he shall bless his chosen in the kingdom of heaven.

What if you leave your children under age? Be not discouraged, for God will preserve them, as the signet upon his right hand, or as the apple of his eye. Think upon Josias, who was but eight years old when he succeeded in the kingdom of Judea; nevertheless there was never a prince more holy and more religious; none ever did more good to the church of God. And that you may be able to strengthen your faith, and confirm your glorious expectations, meditate upon the life of Joash, who was but one year old when his father was killed, and an infernal fury sought to destroy him; but in the middle of so many tragedies God preserved him alive by a miracle, and placed him in a glorious manner upon the throne of his fathers. Seeing therefore that it is the pleasure of him who gives and takes away the earthly crowns, leave cheerfully this corruptible one, to receive another that is immortal

mortal and incorruptible. You also, noble governors of countries and castles, that represent the persons of your kings and princes, remember that this dignity comes not only from the appointment of your masters, but from God himself, who holds in his hands the hearts of all the kings and princes of the world. Remember what our Saviour told the governor of Judea, "Thou couldest have no power upon me, if it were not given to thee from above," John xix. Let all the world see by you, that there is nothing more agreeable with piety towards God, than fidelity and loyalty to your prince. Take heed that you abuse not your power and authority in satisfying your passions, and pleasing your covetousness or vanity. Protect not the guilty, and oppress not the innocent. Seeing that you are appointed to punish evil-doers, and to encourage such as do well, behave yourselves as if you were always in the sight of your prince ; or rather, behave yourself as in the presence and in the sight of God, before whom all things are naked and open, and as if you were to give up unto him an account of your stewardship. Whilst you are happily employed in the service of your prince, and of your country, if Death comes to interrupt your prosperity, yield yourselves, without resistance, to the wise orders of him who is both your sovereign Lord and theirs, to whom you must be subject on earth.

Trouble not yourselves with the thoughts of the things that shall happen after your death, and think not but that there are yet some worthy and able to succeed you in your employments. When God is pleased to be favourable to kings, and to cause their empire to flourish, he raiseth up faithful ministers, and wise governors ; as when he gave to Pharaoh a Joseph, to Hezekiah an Eliakim, to Nebuchadnezzar a Daniel. When he pleaseth to search into his unfathomed treasures, he can quickly provide men after his own heart, adorned with all the abilities required for a worthy discharge of a glorious employment.

ployment. In the mean while, if thou hast overcome Satan, sin, the world, and Death, thou shalt go and take possession of a greater and more lasting glory. He that bears upon his garments and thighs this inscription, "The King of kings, and Lord of lords," hath given out this unchangeable promise, "He that shall overcome, and hath kept my words until the end, I will give unto him the power over the nations, and he shall govern them with a rod of iron."

Right honourable counsellors, that assist your prince with your sage advices, and you, inferior magistrates and judges, never forget what Jehoshaphat said to the judges of his kingdom, 2 Chron. xix. "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore, now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," Ps. lxxv. Whensoever ye go to take your place among the judges of the kingdom, remember that God sits there upon his throne; and every time that you give a charge, or pronounce a sentence, consider that you are to follow God's directions, and that this great Creator takes notice of your actions, words, and of the motions of your heart, and that he understands your most secret thoughts. Judge with the same equity and justice with which ye desire to be judged. If you be tempted to overthrow right, to conceal truth, or to commit any injustice, either by a base compliance, by an expectation of worldly advantage, or for filthy lucre, remember that it is the devil that tempts you; pray therefore to God, to deliver you from his power. And that you may be better able to command yourselves with an holy awe, mind that Death summons you to appear in person, nay, drags you before the universal Judge of mankind, to give up an account of all your actions, and of the sentences you have given. But if Death surpriseth you, when you are discharging your office with all the diligence
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and integrity imaginable, stay not till it forces you, but cast off willingly the robes of judicature, to take the habit of a supplicant, and pray to God that he may not enter into judgment with you, because no living creature shall be justified in his sight, Ps. cxliii.

Let not the thoughts of what shall happen after your decease, obstruct your Christian resolution. There are men enough in the world of a sufficient ability to supply your places; and God is able to raise up some that we dream not of, as when he created in one day threescore and ten judges in Israel, whom he endowed with sufficient abilities, and with the graces of his holy Spirit. He may produce some that will be as righteous and just as yourselves, and, it may be, more enlightened with discretion and prudence than you. Come off therefore willingly from these seats of judicature, so beset with thorns, upon which you should never rest without horror and dread, if you sincerely fear God; and go with confidence to the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv.

And as there may be as much regard to religion in the tents of David, as in the temple of Solomon; and that the sword of Gideon agrees well with that of the Lord of Hosts; I may make my address to you, worthy generals, brave captains, and generous nobility, unto whom kings, princes, and commonwealths, commit the leading of their armies. I speak not to you, profane Atheists, who laugh at the sacred mysteries, and are of opinion, that all fear of God must be banished out of your troops and companies, and that the most wretched varlets are the best soldiers; but I speak to you, christian and religious commanders, who forget not, by your promotion amongst men, that you are nevertheless the soldiers of Jesus Christ: and though you wear at your side a material sword, forget not to employ also the sword of the Spirit, the word --

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of God that dwells in your hearts. Neither do I intend to speak to you that manage war with an intent only to satisfy your revenge, your ambition, or your covetousness; but I speak to you, brave and worthy captains, who have purified your weapons in an heavenly fire, who undertake war only to procure a more lasting peace to the public, and fight only to serve your prince and country; you that are the great bulwarks of states and empires, by whose labours and vigilancy men sleep in security. Let the whole world see by experience in your persons, that there is nothing that agrees better with true generosity, than piety and the fear of God. Behave yourselves always as in the sight of your Maker, who is always present, and accompanies you in all your actions. Remember that he hath commanded to remove all filth from the camp of Israel, because of his holy and divine presence. If you will obtain his blessing upon your persons and designs, cast out of your armies the filth of vice, and punish, without mercy, rapes, burnings, impiety, and blasphemies. Cause your soldiers to put in practice St. John the Baptist's most excellent advice to the military men of his time, who enquired what they were to do to be saved; "Do violence (said he) to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." Live as lambs, and fight as lions. Spare as much as you can the blood of your soldiers, and shed not that of your enemies but against your wills; for they are God's creatures, and bear his image. Never trust to your own valour and experience, but remember that it is God that gives courage, and strengthens your hands in the day of battle, who causeth fear and terror to fly where he listeth. Look always upon David's example: there never was a captain more courageous, nor more willing to venture his life; and yet there never was a person more zealous in prayer to God, nor more submissive to his will, nor more careful to return unto him the praises of all his advantages. And if Death comes to put a stop to your victories, or to call you away in a time when your

prudence and courage are requisite, wonder not at it, consider that God offers you by this means an occasion of a more glorious victory, and a more magnificent triumph: For the victory over thousands of mortal men, and the whole world, is nothing in comparison of the victory over Death and hell. Inquire not who shall succeed you in the conduct of your army, out of a distrust of God's providence; for he who is able to raise up children unto Abraham out of stones, can raise up also from thence captains and soldiers. When he pleaseth to give a check to the enemies' pride, and to deliver his people from their tyranny, he can raise up Gideons, Jephthahs, Samsons, and such like extraordinary commanders. Who knows but that he will cause a general to succeed you, that shall have more courage and generosity, and, perhaps, shall be blessed with a greater happiness and more glorious successes? When Moses departed to his rest, Joshua commanded in his stead; and for that purpose, God endued him with a noble spirit of wisdom and courage. For one enemy that Moses overcame, Joshua destroyed thousands. Whereas Moses did but coast along the land of Canaan, and turn up and down in the wilderness; Joshua brought the people of Israel into that pleasant country, and into a peaceable possession of it. Since therefore it is God's pleasure, leave to others the care of temporal wars, and go ye, gather the pleasant and delicious fruits of an eternal peace, which hath been purchased unto you by the blood of the Son of God.

Likewise, you faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, remember to shew the example of a resignation to God's good pleasure, according to your doctrine. Let not Death cause you to draw back. Thou hast, brother, a will to glorify God on earth; well, but thou shalt glorify him better in heaven, with more zeal and less impediment. Whilst thou art fettered with this sinful flesh, thy ministry must needs be accompanied with many imperfections. Thou imaginest, that if it please God

to prolong thy days, thou mayest be instrumental in the reformation of the world; but thou art mistaken, brother; for this world is accustomed to evil, and this age is hardened in iniquity: Preach as much as thou wilt to the inhabitants of this inferior world, it shall be as in the times of Noah, the herald of righteousness, when the patience of God waited for the conversion of sinners; for the whole earth is so corrupt, that all the thoughts and imaginations of the heart of man are evil continually. They are rebellious and sinful from the cradle; and if God doth not interpose his almighty hand, and implant in us the virtue of his holy Spirit, they will grow worse and worse, until they tumble into their graves. If thou afflict never so much thy just and innocent soul, and spend thyself in exhorting the greatest sinners to fly from the wrath to come, and the judgments of God that hang over their guilty heads; it may be thou shalt be mocked by thy nearest relations, as Lot was by his sons-in-law. Though thou shouldst thunder out the threatenings of God's law against the abominations of Israel, as zealously as the prophet Isaiah, thou shalt be forced at last to confess, "I have laboured in vain, I have employed my strength for nought," Isa. xlix. Jer. vi. 'Thou' thine eyes should be converted into a fresh spring of tears, and thou shouldst spend the days and the nights in calling upon the superstitious, the schismatics, and idolaters, to forsake their false worship, and their unchristian proceedings, thou shalt not be able to soften the hardness of their hearts, nor overcome their obstinacy: but they will be ready to speak to thee in the Jews' language to Jeremiah; As for the word thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee; but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouths, to burn incense unto the Queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil,"

evil," Jer. xlii. Though thou shouldst speak with a divine tongue, and with an heavenly wisdom, thou mayest have good cause to cry out, "Who hath believed our report; and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Isa. liii. John xii. In short, as the rivers of fresh water, that run continually into the sea, cannot cure its bitter and salt qualities; thus thy good and holy life, thy learned and excellent sermons, will not be able to remedy the corruption of this present evil age, nor stop the torrent, and hinder the overflowing of vice; for thy labour and industry, if compared with the corruption of the world, are as inconsiderable as a few drops of water in comparison to the ocean. This cursed earth may be watered by thy sweat and tears; it will nevertheless bring forth nothing but briars and thistles. The weeds which thou thinkest to pluck up, will tear thy skin, and draw blood out of thy hands. In short, he that plants is nothing, nor he that watereth, but it is God who giveth the increase, 1 Cor. iii.

It is justly to be feared, that in staying any longer time in this unwholesome air, thou mayest receive some evil impression from the general contagion. It is to be feared, that thou mayest sully thy pure hands by handling so many wounds and sores, and that the thorns of this cursed earth may pluck off the wool of thy harmless and innocent life.

But though thou shouldst have a thousand times more gifts and graces, and that thy labours should bring far greater advantages and profit to Christ's church, it belongs not to thee to give laws to thy God, but to follow the motion of his will. Leave to him the chief care of his own household, and rest upon his eternal providence. He hath more right in the church than thou canst pretend to; for he hath created it by his power, and redeemed it with his precious blood. He that cares not for his own, especially for those of his family, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. And can

can God, who is faithfulness itself, and the very being of truth ; God, who cannot deny himself, and whose gifts and callings are without repentance, Rom. xii. can such a God cast off all care of his church, of that which he embraceth with an eternal love, and cherisheth as the apple of his eye? Jer. xxxi. This Father of mercies, who hath not spared his own Son, but hath delivered him to die for his church, how should he not with him freely give her all things? Rom. viii. He understands better than thou, and all the men in the world, what is proper and advantageous for his holy congregation, and for every member that composes it. He knows how to provide for all its wants ; for his wisdom is infinite, and his providence is most wonderful.

When this great God hath a design to plague his enemies, and to declare his justice, he hath always agents ready, and his quiver full of arrows. As soon as he commands the holy angels, that wait before him, to cast their sickles in the earth, or to reap, or pour down the phials of his wrath, these holy spirits fly with an unspeakable swiftness to perform his sacred pleasure, Rev. xiv. and xvi. Likewise when he intends to do good to his chosen, he finds in every place the heralds of his mercy, and his divine hand is always full of blessings. As the main ocean of his wonderful bounty can never be dried up, likewise the channels by which he conveys them to us shall never fail.

The cause of thy complaints should serve to appease thy grief, nourish thy faith, and increase thy hopes; for if thou art graced with extraordinary gifts, this proceeds not from thy nature, nor thine industry, but God's favour and bounty. Now thou mayest be assured, that his hand is not shortened, his great power is not lessened, the well-springs of all his blessings and wonders are not stopped nor dried up, Isa. lix. He that sends a desired whiteness, the prognostic of an approaching

proaching harvest to the spacious fields, Job iv. he sends also into his spiritual harvest, labourers, when he sees it convenient. In this latter age, and in the old age of the world, as well as in the first appearance of his church, Luke xix. he finds men to work in his vineyard ; or rather he forms and fashions them with the hand of his grace, and enables them by his holy Spirit ; for he gives the mouth and the tongue ; he maketh deaf, dumb, and blind, and restores the eye-sight ; he calls things that are not, as if they were, Matt. xx. Exod. iv. Rom. iii.

When he designs for himself a tabernacle, he calls by name a Bezaleel, and fills him with the spirit of wisdom, of understanding and knowledge, in all manner of workmanship, Exod. xxxi. When he resolves to deliver the children of Israel from their Babylonish captivity, and to build the temple of Jerusalem, he hath at his command Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, Ezra. vi. 14. He stirs up Zorobabels, Esdrases, and Nehemiahs. Likewise when ~~he~~ intends to repair the breaches of his house, and to increase the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, he makes servants, and fit agents, and bestows upon them sufficient graces for such a noble work, Psa. viii. Matt. xxi. As he has never left himself without witness in doing good, thus he has never been without witnesses to declare his sacred truths, Luke xix. By the mouth of babes he perfects his praise ; and as our Saviour told the Jews, " If these held their peace, the stones would cry out," Luke xix. God will take the pillars of the idol's temple to prop up his church, rather than suffer it to fall down. He will change the wolves into lambs, and the lambs into shepherds, rather than his sheep should want their necessary pasture. He chooseth the feeble things of this world to confound the strong ; the despicable, and such as are not, to destroy such as are, 1 Cor. ix.

Thus

Thus God never leaves his church without some testimony of his favour, some powerful instrument of his grace : But many times, when he removes one good thing from us, he bestows upon us something more rare and excellent. This consideration glads the heart of Joseph upon his death-bed, as appears by what he said to his brethren ; “ I am going to die, but God will not fail to visit you, and cause you to go up from hence unto the land that he sware unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” Gen. l. For instead of a Joseph, who had occasioned the bondage, God raised up a Moses, who delivered them with an almighty hand, and stretched-out arm. Thus God took up Elijah with a chariot of fire, 2 Kings ii. but he gave unto Elisha a double portion of his master’s spirit, and caused his glorious miracle to appear more admirable. Also our Lord and Saviour, when he had finished the great work of our redemption, ascended up into heaven, a cloud conveying him up to the throne of his glory ; but, according to the promise, he hath not left us destitute, but hath sent us the Comforter to dwell with us for ever, namely, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world seeth not, nor can know, John xiv. Christ’s corporal presence was enjoyed but by a small number of people ; but his divine Spirit is like a large river, that swells and runs over every where, John vii. This holy Spirit is not only with us, but also within us ; he is poured out into our hearts, he seals us for the day of redemption ; he is the earnest of our inheritance, until the full consummation of the glory reserved for us in heaven. Therefore when this merciful Saviour saw his apostles afflicted in an extraordinary manner for his leaving of the world, he speaks to them in this language ; “ Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts : nevertheless, I tell you the truth ; it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, John xvi. When St. Paul took his last farewell of the elders and people of the church

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of Ephesus, they wept bitterly, being grieved to the heart because he said, "that none of them should see his face any more." But to comfort them, he assures them, that in heaven they had a Father and Protector, and such a Shepherd as would never forsake them. "I commend you, (saith he) to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified," Acts xxii. Remember therefore, O man of God, seriously to consider all these things ; if the Lord, who has called thee to the sacred function of the ministry, continues thee in the world, labour with courage and diligence in thine holy employment ; be not tired in the service of this good Master, and merciful Saviour ; fight the good fight of faith ; endure patiently all kind of labour, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ ; be as earnest and as careful for the Lord's sheep, as Jacob was of those of Laban. Hear what he professeth of himself, "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes, Gen. xxxi. Jacob endured patiently these grievous pains and labour, and the time of his service seemed to him to be but a few days, because of the love he had for Rachel. Likewise thou wilt joyfully endure the troubles of thine office, and bear with patience all the hardships, if thou dost sincerely love the Lord Jesus, and his heavenly spouse ; if thou dost esteem the salvation of souls, for whom Jesus Christ hath suffered death ; if thou hast well understood the excellency of thine heavenly reward, and the glory prepared for thee, when thou shalt have finished the time of thy painful and difficult service, and of thy mortal race : for they who bring many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, Dan. xii. Jacob had to do with a deceitful and unfaithful man ; but God is not a man that he should lie, or as the son of man that he should repent, Gen. xxiii. "Be thou faithful unto death, and he will give thee the crown of life," Rev. ii.

. If it is the Lord's pleasure to lessen this task, so that instead of employing thee in his vineyard, he intends to take thee up into his kingdom, to drink there of his new wine; if at the time that thou thinkest of sowing with tears, thou art transported to the place where thou mayest reap with songs of triumph; if in lieu of the opposition which thou must suffer from sinners, God will grant unto thee his eternal consolations, and receive thee into the harmonious societies of the church triumphant; adore his goodness and his infinite mercy, cast thyself into his hands, and resolve cheerfully to will what is pleasing to him. If during thine abode in the valley of tears, God hath given thee a livelihood, and if thou hast found in him thy joy, thy satisfaction, and thy greatest comfort; death will be thy advantage; thou shalt find in thy Saviour thy rest, thy glory, and eternal delights, Phil. i. Meditate often upon the words of the holy apostle St. Peter, "The elders that are amongst you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is amongst you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples of the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v.

. You also, who are afraid to leave behind you a desolate, afflicted, and comfortless widow; come and learn this lesson, to rely upon the goodness and tender compassions of the Father of mercies, who never fails to comfort the distressed in all their afflictions, and who is always near to them who call upon him in their troubles, 2 Cor. ii. Ps. cxlv. He favours the widow to that degree, that he calls himself, "The Judge of the widows," Ps. lxxviii. that is, the protector of their integrity and right, and severe revenger of the wrongs that they

may suffer. Therefore God tells us in express words, "That he maintains the widow, and establisheth her borders," Prov. xv. Since Job was so merciful as to cause the widow's heart to sing, Job xxviii. how much more may she expect from God's goodness? He will doubtless fill her with his heavenly joys, and the ravishing comforts of his holy Spirit. I mean not the foolish widows, that seek for nothing but pleasure, worldly diversion, and carnal pastime; who live in the delights of the age, "who are dead whilst they live;" but I mean those wise widows, who being left alone by their husband's death, have their confidence and trust in God, continuing in prayer day and night.

Our great God, and merciful Lord, hath not only said in general, that he is the judge, the protector, and comforter of the widow; but he hath vouchsafed to some his most signal favours and extraordinary blessings. In the reign of Ahab, while a cruel famine overspread the land, God sent the prophet Elijah to a poor widow of Sarepta, who was preparing herself and her son to die, as soon as they had eaten a little remnant of meal and oil that was left. But the holy prophet comforted her in this manner; "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth," 1 Kings xvii. Many poor widows have met with the like miraculous supplies; for by a secret benediction God hath caused their provisions not to fail them. Though perhaps they have not enjoyed any extraordinary plenty, this all-wise purveyor hath furnished them with things necessary for them: so that not only both they and their children have subsisted in the greatest calamities, but they have had the honour of assisting God's prophets. And as the poor widow in the Gospel gave alms out of her poverty; such mites have been more pleasing to God than the treasures of the wealthy. Moreover, when the Son of God was in the world, he was
pleased

pleased to express how much care and compassion he had of widows: for when he met at the gate of the city of Nain a poor widow that wept bitterly for her only son, who was carried out to be buried, he was moved with a tender feeling of her affliction; therefore he raised the young man to life again, and restored him to his mother. It was also at the solicitation of some devout widows, that St. Peter raised Dorcas from death to life. I must needs take notice here of an admirable story, proper to comfort every faithful servant of God. The widow of a deceased prophet made this bitter complaint to Elisha: "Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen," 2 Kings iv. God, who hears the cry of the afflicted, had compassion on that poor distressed widow, so that he gave unto her, by Elisha's means, in a wonderful manner, sufficient for the payment of her debts, and to nourish her family. By this glorious example, God declares the care that he will have of [his prophets' widows, whilst they walk in his fear, and continue in his holy covenant.

To conclude: Modern and ancient histories are full of notable examples of wise and virtuous widows, who have discreetly governed their families, and upon whom God's blessings have visibly appeared.

Almighty God, who is wonderful in all his works, causeth not only fathers to make provision for their children, but he gives to some such children, in his mercy, as provide for their fathers, and are an extraordinary blessing to their family, as Joseph was to Jacob and his household. Such wise and virtuous children, who are so necessary to their parents, whom they love and honour, might, out of their great affection for them, speak to Death in the language of the young man in the Gospel, "Suffer me to go first and bury my father.

Let me alone a while in the world; suffer me to live, O Death, until I have accompanied my parents to their grave, until I have closed their eyelids, and performed the last duties that nature requires. But hearken, officious son! what the Lord saith to thee, "Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me." Leave to them that remain after thee the care of worldly affairs, but do thou obey God's call. Thy charity for others must not cause thee to be cruel to thyself, and disobedient to the command of thy God. Fear not to leave thy father and mother, when thou art going to cast thyself into the ravishing embraces of thy spiritual Bridegroom, and of thy heavenly Father. The great God, who hath given thee, or rather lent thee to them, who caused them to subsist before thou hadst a being, can feed and bless them without thee. His mercy is not tied to thy person, nor confined to thine industry. When our Lord and Saviour was upon the cross, at the sight of the blessed Virgin, and the disciple whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son;" and to St. John, "Son, behold thy mother," John xix. "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house." In like manner, when God calls unto his eternal rest him who was the supporter of his family, as Joseph was, he provides for them by some other means. So that if Elkanah could justly say to his wife, when she wept because she had no child, "Am I not better to thee than ten sons?" 1 Sam. i. we may say, with more reason, that God's grace, his assistance, and the comforts of his holy Spirit, are more worth than ten thousand children.

The strongest passion, and that which I judge to be the most apt to hinder a good Christian, is that which fathers and mothers have for their little ones; especially if they be in an age unable to help themselves. But that this natural passion may not transport us beyond the limits prescribed by reason and piety, consider well the promise that God made
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to Abraham, "I am thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee," Gen. xvii. and what St. Peter told the Jews, "To you, and to your children, was the promise made, and to all such as are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii. Chiefly meditate well on, and imprint in your minds, that which God spake to you from heaven by the prophet Jeremiah, "Leave me thy fatherless children, and I will give them to eat, and let thy widows trust in me," Jer. xlix. God is the Father of us all, but more especially of the fatherless; he hath compassion on them, and provides for all their necessities. Thy children are more tender to him than to thee; for thou hast been but a feeble instrument in his hand to put them into the world: but he is the Creator of their souls, the Maker of their bodies, and the Redeemer of them both. He loves them with a stronger and more constant love than the best fathers, and the most tender-hearted mothers. Therefore he assures us by his holy prophet, that though the mother should forget the child to whom she gives suck, and though she should have no pity on the fruit of her womb, yet he will never forget us. So that all the children that fear God, may say as David, "When my father and my mother have forsaken me, the Lord will receive me," Ps. xxvii.

If Job had a tender care of the orphans, Job xxxi. and Pharaoh's daughter had compassion on the tears of a little strange child, how much more shall God, who is the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, have pity on children, that he hath redeemed with the precious blood of his only Son? Exod. ii. 2 Cor. i. Since he hears the cries of the young ravens, he will soon hear the prayers, sighs, and tears of his servants' children, Psalm cxlvii. ver. 9. He clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, Matt. vi. how much rather will he clothe your children, O ye of little faith? Doth your heavenly Father nourish the birds of the air? and will he not rather

rather feed your children, that are better worth than all the birds together? John xiv. In short, since God hath had compassion on little Ishmael, and on the children of Nineveh, how much rather will he regard children who have been sanctified to him from their mother's womb?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was on earth, took up in his arms the little children that were brought to him, laid his hands upon them, and recommended them to God his Father. And now that he is in glory, his love and tender compassion for them is not lessened. Therefore, if we offer him our children with all our hearts, he will take them in his protection, and stretch over them the arms of his mercy, that he will never take from them. In short, since he promiseth to them the kingdom of heaven, and his eternal felicities, he will not withhold from them things needful for this present life.

We can do nothing without God, but God can do all things without us. A great many children become debauched, and are spoiled by their parents' over fond tuition; whereas many that are out of their sight, and live when they are departed, shew good examples of piety and goodness. For example: in Isaac's house, in the presence of this holy man, there was a profane Esau, a glutton; whereas Jacob, that lived at a distance from his parents, when he fled for fear of his brother, had always before his eyes the "Fear of Isaac his father," Gen. xxvi and xxxi. that is to say, the God whom his father worshipped. In Jacob's house, Reuben defiled his father's bed with incest; whereas Joseph, in Potiphar's house, chose rather an apparent death, and present sufferings, than to touch his master's wife, Gen. xxxix. David had the unhappiness to see some of his children guilty of incest and murder, whereas Joash and Josias, two orphan princes, in their tenderest infancy became virtuous and religious kings, zealous for the service of God. How many children are there,

there, who, notwithstanding all the care and labour of their fathers, fall into extremity of misery! How many are taken from their parents' embraces, and dragged from thence to the gallows! whereas there are others, who without father or parent's assistance, do not only escape grievous dangers, but rise to honours and dignities; as Joseph in Egypt; Daniel in Babylon; and Esther, a fatherless and poor captive child, became a queen; and God made use of her, and of her credit, to deliver his people from Haman's conspiracy. We see every day that God blesseth in an extraordinary manner many orphans. Cast your eyes upon the children of the blessed martyrs, and you shall find many whom God hath made notable instances of his special favours, and of the mercy that he promiseth to shew unto thousand generations of them that serve him, and obey his holy commands. Thou shalt meet with some that are much more happy in this life, than the posterity of the persecutors. Thou shalt see them with astonishment bestow their alms upon the children of such as have plundered their houses, and spoiled their goods.

Whilst you are yet in being, exhort your children to fear God, to serve him, and to addict themselves with all their heart to the study of piety, that hath the promises of this life, and the life to come. Teach them first to seek the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added to them over and above.

Finally, though your life should be much more useful to your children than it is, remember what our Lord and Saviour saith, "He that loves son or daughter more than him, is not worthy of him." Heaven is far more excellent than the earth; the salvation and the happiness of our souls, is to be preferred to all the considerations of flesh and blood. It is not just, that such as have given us, or to whom we have given, the enjoyment of a temporal life, should hinder us
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from the fruition of a spiritual and eternal life. Besides, when we recommend them to God, we put them into the protection of a true and wise Friend, who is acquainted with their necessities, who is so good to procure them that which shall be needful for them; and is almighty, able to accomplish all things which may be for their advantage.

Let us therefore conclude, that it is the duty of a good father, that fears God, not to resist Death, nor to fly from it when the Lord calls: but according to the good example of the ancient patriarchs, he ought to end his days willingly; with the praises of God in his mouth, and with exhortation to his children to love him, fear him, and serve him with all their heart; to continue in his holy covenant, and to prefer him to all the riches and honours of this miserable earth. And as when our Saviour had bestowed his blessing upon his disciples, a cloud carried him out of their sight into heaven: likewise when a good Christian shall have thus given his blessing to his children, he will shut his eyes to all inferior things, and think upon nothing but the eternal bliss of the heavenly paradise.

If God calls us to himself in a miserable and wretched time, when our beloved babes are weeping about our bed, ready to say to us, as Isaac unto Abraham, "My father, here is wood, a fire, and a knife, but where is the beast for the burnt-offering?" Gen. xxii. God causeth the visible signs of his heavy displeasure to appear every where; in every corner we see nothing but fire and sword. Death's frightful image, and the fearful appearance of massacres, do scare and terrify us. Destruction is come into the holy places, the fire hath reached as far as God's own sanctuary, and nobody is able to deliver us: the deluge of God's wrath hath overspread our land in such a manner, that, as Noah's dove, we can find no place to set our feet on. All our expectation is,
that

that God would also reach down his hand to us from above, to receive us into that ark which is above the heavens, and to which our soul is now departing, Gen. viii. If our dear children speak to us in this language, let us, with the courage, assurance, and faith, of the father of the faithful, return to them this answer, My children, the Lord will provide, Gen. xii. Rom. iv. It is he that acts beyond probability, and contrary to expectation ; who causeth the dead to live ; and calls things that are not as if they were. He will send to you his good angels to help you in all your necessities. When you shall be reduced to the utmost extremity, ready to receive the last stroke of death, God's hand will stop the sword of his justice, he will change your crying and fears into joy and eternal gladness. There will be some holy and devout soul, that loves the public peace and tranquillity, that will bring to you the olive-branch of peace. God can appease the tempest with his breath ; at his command the winds will be still, and the roaring waves, that are ready to devour you, will return to their former tranquillity. Otherwise he will preserve you miraculously alive in the midst of the greatest troubles, and most fearful confusion. And as Abraham found a ram entangled in a bush ; likewise, in the midst of the sharpest storms of affliction, and in the most intricate difficulties that you dread, you shall find unexpected sweetness and comforts. And as several colours of the beautiful rainbow appear upon the cloud whence proceed the storms and the rain ; likewise thus, in the greatest afflictions, God will give you some testimonies of his fatherly care, and of his divine love. The confidence that you shall have in God shall never be confounded ; for the love of God is settled in your hearts, by the holy Spirit that he hath given you. The hotter the fire of affliction shall be, the more and greater miracles it shall bring forth. The higher the waters of your flood shall rise, the nearer they will approach your souls to God, and the nearer you will draw to heaven, the place of your souls' everlasting

rest. Comfort therefore yourselves, my dear children, and assure yourselves, that by the favourable assistance of God's grace and mercy, we shall speedily see one another again. I shall not return to you, but you shall come to me ; for I am going to that spacious and magnificent dwelling, whither our Lord and Saviour Christ is gone before, to prepare a place for us, and where he will embrace us all. I am going up to my Father, and your Father ; to my God, and to your God."



A PRAYER and MEDITATION for such as are in any command, to prepare for Death, by trusting upon God's Providence.

O KING of kings, and sovereign Lord of the world ! I adore thy divine Majesty, with a real sense of thy special favour, for having placed me in this honourable station, advanced me to this command and empire, which I am now ready to resign into thy hands : Suffer me not to be puffed up with pride, or to forget my mortal condition in the midst of all this outward splendour and glory. While I continue here, grant that I may study to promote thy honour and service, and treat such as are under me as my fellow-creatures, and thy servants : Grant that I may behave myself as in thy sight, and in all my actions be ready to give up an account to thee, my great Judge, of my temporal administration. Grant that Death may never surprise me, but that I may always be prepared to entertain it with joy, to lay down this crown and sceptre, to cast off this purple robe, and all those marks of my authority, to yield them into thy hands. Wean my heart and affections from their temporal and deceitful vanities, that I may be willing to part with them at thy command. Let me look up to thy heavenly kingdom, meditate upon those divine excellencies of eternity provided for me, from which Death shall have no power to remove me. I submit

submit myself wholly, with all the riches, grandeur, and power, that thou hast bestowed upon me, unto thy divine pleasure, to dispose of me as thy wisdom shall judge convenient. But I beseech thee, good God, take into thy protection the subjects that I leave behind. Continue thy truth and gospel to them and their posterity. Grant that my successor may have the same zeal, love, and care for religion, that he may be a support to it, and cause it to flourish more and more. Give to all thy people grace to love and fear thee, to be united among themselves, and obedient to authority. And now, Lord, receive me into thine eternal mercy, and into that kingdom where I may glorify thee for ever. *Amen.*

*A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a Minister of the Gospel,
who looks upon Death with joy and comfort.*

O UNIVERSAL Shepherd and Bishop of souls! I cannot sufficiently acknowledge and value the graces and mercies with which I find myself blessed, and thy favour in calling me to an office which the angels esteem an honour to be employed in, and in which thou hast been active during thine abode in the world. Thou hast been pleased to appoint me a minister of thy people, and to commit to my trust the dearest and most precious thing in the world, namely, the church, for which thou hast expressed so great a love, as to give thyself and life to redeem it. I am sensible, O Lord, of my weakness and insufficiency for so weighty a charge; since I am to encounter with the world's hatred and cruelty, the devil's wiles and malice, and many hardships besides from those who should encourage me. I expect therefore from thy power and goodness the assistance needful to support me under all temporal difficulties, while thou art pleased to continue me in this employ. Open a wide gate to the gospel of thy

thy grace, that all people may see the salvation of God. Disappoint all the counsels of thine enemies, and grant that I may neither be frightened nor corrupted in the discharge of my duty. Subdue Satan under our feet, and grant that thy truth may be always victorious over error and heresy. I am now, Lord, to appear before thee, to give thee an account of my stewardship. I appeal therefore to thine infinite knowledge, that can witness for me, how faithfully and sincerely I have endeavoured to perform the duties of my calling; and my conscience can testify for me, that I have declared nothing but what is agreeable with thy divine oracles. I have endeavoured to instruct the ignorant, to discourage vice and profaneness, to comfort the troubled in mind, and in all things to promote religion, piety, glory, and the good of thy church in the world. I have preferred thy will and thy heavenly treasure to all worldly advantages; I have taken a singular pleasure in declaring the wonderful counsels of thy wisdom, and the mysteries of thy kingdom; I have delighted and endeavoured to save souls; so that I may say with David, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." But, for all this I pretend not to be justified before thee. In all humility I cast myself at thy feet, to implore the pardon of my frequent imperfections, neglects, and miscarriages, which I have been guilty of in thy service. I confess I have been wanting in my zeal and charity; too remiss in the reproof of vice; too much concerned for myself, and too affectionate for my worldly interest. O Lord, if thou shouldst now treat me according to the severity of thy justice, and require from me the souls perished by my negligence or evil example, I should expect the doom of the unprofitable servant. But there is mercy reserved for me with thee, O my God! Accept therefore my repentance for all the errors and omissions of my life past, and lay them not to my charge, but comfort me with thy salvation. Strengthen my faith, increase my hope and assurance in thee. And when Death shall come

to make a dissolution, give me strength and grace to welcome it as thy messenger sent to remove me from my station, to free me from my pains and labour, and to convey me to thine eternal rest, where I shall be no longer sensible of the viciousness and impieties of the age. Gracious God, preserve thy church and people from all ravenous wolves and mercenary souls, and raise up a faithful, solid, wise, and learned clergy. Bring in our dissenting brethren, and give a check to the spirit of division, that we may all serve thee in unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. But now I am called to another ministry, where I shall meet with no trouble nor resistance ; no weariness, grief, pain, sorrow, or displeasure ; where I shall be received into the embraces of my blessed Saviour, who will lead me to the fountain of living water, and wipe away all tears from mine eyes. *Amen.*

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for the Father of a Family.

FATHER of Eternity, I yield unto thee my unfeigned thanks, because thou hast made me an happy instrument to put into the world children, out of whose mouths thou mayest accomplish thine own praise, and who may serve thee here below, and worship thee for ever in heaven amongst the thousands of angels. Whilst I have been in the world, I have brought them up in thy love and fear. I have caused them to suck from the breast the milk of piety ; and when they were come to an age of understanding, I have taught them to walk in thy precepts. I have laboured to shew them a good example, and to guide them in thy truth. And now that I am ready to return unto thee, who art the author of my life and being, the only source of my happiness, I leave them in thy merciful hands, beseeching thee to look down upon them with the eyes of thy compassion. They are thine, O Lord ; acknowledge thine own image and handy-work.

work. Thy finger hath fashioned their bodies, where so many wonders are to be seen ; and their souls, that animate and move them, are the breath and beams of thy Divinity. Thou hast engaged to be our God, and the God of our posterity after us. Thy great and precious promises have been made to us, and to our children. O heavenly Father, I desire not thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. Cover them under the shadow of thy wings, and preserve them from those miseries and calamities, which thou hast threatened to send upon the inhabitants of the earth for their sins. If thou chastisest them, let it be with the rod of men, and with the scourge of the sons of men ; but withdraw not from them thy grace and thy fatherly compassion. Let the flames of affliction render their faith more pure, their lives more holy, and their zeal more sincere and earnest ; and let it prepare them for thee, and thine eternal bliss. O holy Father, thou seest that the age wherein we live is extremely corrupt, that the earth is inclined to vice, and that sin reigns every where. Thou knowest also how weak the nature of children is, and how inclinable to evil ; therefore strengthen them, I beseech thee, with such antidotes as may preserve them from the infection of the times. Suffer not the wickedness of the world to gain upon their affections, nor Satan to prevail upon them by his suggestions, nor evil company to spoil their pious education. Give them an understanding to know thee, an heart to love thee, and affections to embrace thee and thy glory. Let thy holy angels guard them by night and by day. Let thy providence defend them, thy word instruct them, thy promises comfort them, and thy holy Spirit regenerate them, and imprint in their souls thy blessed image. Give them neither poverty nor riches, but nourish them with food convenient. Make them to taste of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come. Inflame them with thy love and charity, and adorn them with all christian virtues ; but chiefly
sanctify

sanctify them with thy holy Spirit, and make them to become new creatures; since without sanctification none shall see thy face in glory. Confirm them for ever in thy holy covenant, and give them grace to transmit it to their posterity after them, as a blessed inheritance, that thou mayest be glorified by them from generation to generation, to all eternity. Suffer not the world, nor hell, to pluck them out of thine hand, that nothing may separate them from the love which thou hast shewed to them in Jesus Christ thine only Son. Let not Death terrify them; but let it rather rejoice and comfort them, because that it is the entrance to the glorious dwelling of their heavenly Father, and to the celestial paradise. Whatsoever change or alteration shall happen here below, let them always lift up their eyes to thee, who art the same yesterday, to-day, and shalt be the same for ever. Let them never forget their duty to thee, from whom they have received their being and life, that they may prefer the glory of thy great name, the purity of thy worship, and the hopes of thy heavenly kingdom, to all worldly glory, magnificence, riches, advantages, and pleasures of the flesh. Merciful and almighty Lord, I shall not say to thee as Esau did to Isaac, when he had blessed Jacob, "My Father, hast thou but one blessing?" for I am certain that thou hast an infinite number and many inexhaustible fountains of all manner of blessings. But I beseech thee with all the zeal and earnestness that I am capable of, to bless my dear children with thy heavenly and principal favours. Take them into thy protection, bear them in thy hands, embrace them with tender compassion, and let them be as dear to thee as the apple of thine eye. I am now leaving the world, and my children, without grief or mistrusting thy care of them. I am ascending with joy up to thee, who art my God, my Father, and their Father; and I trust in thy great and eternal mercies, one day we shall see one another in thine heavenly kingdom, when we shall be admitted to behold thy face, which shall fill us with unspeakable gladness and pleasure. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIII.

The First Consolation against the Fear of Death,—God will not forsake us in our most grievous Agonies.

MAN is naturally afraid of pain, and abhors sufferings and griefs. Now the most of us are persuaded, that it is impossible to die without enduring great torments ; therefore they abhor Death, not so much for its own sake, as for the evils it inflicts upon us.

That we may be able to drive away this ill-grounded fear, and strengthen our minds against all apprehensions, we must first consider, that death is not so dreadful and painful as is commonly imagined. The Holy Ghost calls it a sleep, and the Heathens themselves have said, that sleep is Death's cousin-german, and the image of frozen Death. Now sleep creeps upon us insensibly ; it charms our senses softly, and with invisible fetters it ties and stops all our most active faculties. Though we sleep every night, we are not able to discover how this happens to us. It is said of Socrates, one of the most famous men of the first ages, having in obedience to the decree of the Athenian judges, drank poison, when he felt the venom benumbing his senses, and Death creeping into his veins, he declared with a pleasant countenance, "That he had never swallowed any thing more sweet and comfortable." Nothing can be imagined more pleasant than the death of the old patriarchs. The holy scripture tells us, that when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, Gen. xlix. The same is related of King David, that when he had persuaded Solomon to "fear God, and to do justice, he slept with his fathers," 1 Kings ii. God is as merciful to many in these latter days, to cause them to die in speaking and calling upon

his holy name. Their souls are not plucked from them by violence; but of their own accord they leave the body, and fly into heaven with an holy cheerfulness. The separation of such souls happens without pain, grief, or suffering.—Such are like to a taper, that goes out without any blast of wind, of its own accord, when the wax that keeps it alive, and nourishes its flame, is totally spent. If you perceive some tossed and tortured with grievous pangs on their death-bed, they are not properly the pangs of death, but the last strugglings and motions of life : for I cannot imagine, that at the moment of the separation of our souls from our bodies, we suffer any pain ; because at that instant the senses are then lulled asleep, and our bodies have no more strength, nor life, to hinder the soul's departing.

Death is so far from being so dreadful and painful as we commonly imagine, that, on the contrary, it is that very thing that puts an end to all our pains and miseries. And I am persuaded, that the diseases that bring us to our graves are not so grievous as the other distempers that we endure whilst we live here on earth ; such as are the cruel gout, a stone in the kidneys, or a cancer in the breast ; for they are tortures that rack us continually, and a fire that consumes us without ceasing. But if our pains should be far more sensible, and that we should have reason to impute them to Death, we have no reason therefore to fly from it, or abhor its approaches : for we have as good cause to curse the hour of our birth, and weep for our victories ; for there is no birth without pain, nor victory without struggling ; the most glorious and flourishing laurels are watered with blood and sweat.

The most excellent things are attained with the greatest difficulties ; and to speak according to the common saying, as “ one nail drives another,” so one evil is a remedy to many other evils. We commonly seek, as a good thing, that

evil that frees us from the violent pains that we can scarce endure. To be healed of our distempers, we swallow bitter pills and potions, to gripe and torment our bowels. To be freed from the stone, we suffer a most painful cutting; and that the gangrene, which infects one of our limbs, might not get to our heart, we endure it with patience to be cut off, whether it be arm or leg. Therefore, though death should be much more grievous, bitter, and more cruel, than is commonly represented, yet we ought to embrace it willingly, because it delivers us not only from some one disease, or some particular pain, but in general from all pains, aches, and distempers. The physic expels not always the humour that disquiets us. When we have drawn out a stone from the bladder, many times others grow in the place, that are worse. The surgeon's hand, let it be ever so expert, answers not always to the patient's expectation; instead of removing his pain, it sometimes increaseth it. But the working and cure of Death is always certain, and never fails; the success is always happy to a christian soul.

That I may supply thee with some comfort in the midst of thy great pains and sufferings, my brother, or my sister, remember that these things happen to thee not by chance, but God appoints them as his wisdom judges convenient. Ascribe not thy disease to the influence of the stars, to blind fortune, &c. but lift up thine eyes to his appointment, who hath stretched out the heavens, and commanded the succession of the seasons, and who is the Author and Lord of thy life. We need not tempt God as the Philistines of old, and require from him a miracle, to know if it be his hand; for God assures us, that he himself inflicts the wound, and binds it up; that his hand strikes, and heals again, 1 Sam. v. "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust; neither doth trouble spring out of the ground," Job v. Who is able to say that these things are come to pass, and the Lord hath not commanded them? Doth not

evil and good proceed from the appointment of the Most High? There is no evil in the city but God hath done it; that is to say, that there is no distemper, nor affliction, but he over-rules and governs it by his wonderful providence.

This persuasion will stop our murmuring in the midst of our greatest trouble and violent pains. It will cause us to say with David, "I have held my peace, Lord, and have not opened my lips, because it was thy doing." Or if we offer to speak, it will be in the language of a blessed servant of God, "Lord, thou troublest me; but it is sufficient for me to know that it is thy hand," Job ii. As if he should have said, This physic is very bitter, O great Physician of my soul and body; but I will freely drink it up, because thou hast prescribed it. It is not just to receive good at the hand of God, and refuse evil; to complain of a disease that he hath sent us for a few days, instead of blessing him for the health he hath continued to us many years. In short, when our souls shall be troubled with anguish of death, when drops of blood shall come out of our veins, we must in such a case lift our eyes to heaven, and say with our Lord and Saviour, "Father, if it please thee that this cup shall not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

The same consideration will keep us from falling into despair, and from fancying, that the evils will swallow us up. For since God sends both evil and good, and that he is faithful and just, that he is true and merciful, he will not suffer us to be tempted, that is, that we should be afflicted, above that we are able, but with the temptation he will make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. He kindles not all his wrath at once, and employs not all his fury. He discovers not all the strength of his arm, Psa. lxxviii. but when his anger is hottest, he remembers to have pity and compassion on the afflicted; for he knows of what we are
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made, and that we are but dust and ashes, Hab. iii. He remembers that we are but flesh, that is to say, weakness itself, a wind that passeth away and returneth not again, Ps. lxxviii. He regulates his chastisements, not according to the horridness of our sins, but according to our great weakness, Gen. xviii. Ps. lxxviii. Therefore when God speaks of David's son, the true and lively image of the holy Seed, with whom he had concluded an eternal covenant, he speaks in this manner ; " If he commit sin, I will chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men ; but my mercy shall not depart away from him," 1 Sam. vii. And St. Paul, treating in general of the afflictions with which God visits his children, 1 Cor. x. he styles them " human temptations," to assure us that they shall never exceed the strength and power of human nature.

The wise and experienced physician appoints neither physic nor bleeding to the patient, until he hath well examined his pulse, and understood thereby the disposition of his body : and shall not God's eternal wisdom, that never acts without good reason, and that perfectly knows the pulse and temper of our souls, that searcheth our reins, and sees our very heart, proportion his physic and remedies to our weaknesses ? For his design is to heal, and not to destroy us. He once inflicted punishments upon Babylon by measure, and numbered the phials of his wrath which he poured upon the seat of the beast : and shall not this good God measure the rods, and weigh the afflictions, with which he reproves his children ? Shall not he number their sighs and tears ? This consideration comforts king David, " Thou (said he) O God, tellest my wanderings ; put thou my tears into thy bottle : are they not written in thy book ?" Ps. lvi. Although flesh and blood may think otherwise, I am persuaded, that diseases may be looked upon as the sweetest and most favourable affliction. It was David's persuasion ; for when he was to choose one of these three

three plagues, either war, famine, or plague, which is the most grievous, most hated, and dreadful of all distempers, he chose the plague. We should never forget the reason of his choice. "Let us fall now (saith he to the prophet Gad) into the hands of the Lord, (for his mercies are great,) and let me not fall into the hand of man."

The evils which God sends to us are expressions of love, and of his fatherly care of us ; for God begins his judgments, that is, his chastisements, at his own house, and shews most severity to his servants whom he loves best, 1 Pet. iv. Therefore he tells the angel of the church of Laodicea, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," Rev. iii. The greatest affliction that can happen to us in the world, is never to be afflicted ; and the most grievous temptation, is never to be tempted. St. Paul to the Hebrews speaks most excellently upon this subject. Forget not (saith he) the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children : my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons," Heb. xii.

All things work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. The diseases of the body are the physic of the soul. The aches which afflict thee are instructions to thy mind. God intends to make thee sigh for thy sins, to water thy couch with thy tears, and abhor the remembrance of thy former miscarriages, Psa. vi. By the causes of thy present pain and grief, he intends to taint thy flesh, mortify thy lust, and make thee partake of his holiness, Heb. xii. If it please God to sanctify his afflictions to thee, thou wilt be able to say
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with David, "It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy commandments. Before that I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep thy word," Psa. cxix.

Though our Lord and Saviour was the only Son, and the beloved of the Father, Heb. v. yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered. God hath predestinated thee to render thee conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. God proposes to strengthen thee with an holy constancy, and to teach thee to possess thy soul with patience, Luke xxi. He causeth thee therefore to learn by experience, that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. He designs to humble thee under his mighty hand, that he may lift thee up in due time, 1 Pet. iii. When God purposed to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, Exod. v. 5. he caused the yoke of their grievous bondage to be more heavy, and loaded them with more intolerable burdens. For the same reason God sends afflictions, and fills us with bitterness, because he would bring us to a loathing of the world, and of its vanities, and to think upon heaven, and its eternal happiness, 1 Cor. xi. He chastiseth thee, that thou mayest not perish with the world: he punisheth thy body, that thy soul might be saved.

As the gold is tried in the fire, thus the Lord casts us into the flames of affliction, that our faith might be tried, and appear more precious than fine gold, 1 Cor. v. We glory in God in the midst of tribulations, knowing that tribulation produceth patience, patience experience, and experience hope. Now hope doth not make us ashamed, because the love of God is spread in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which hath been given to us. God will kindle again thy languishing zeal, and enliven thy prayers, that they may be more acceptable to him. Tell me not that thy distemper is an heavy burden, that hinders thy soul from lifting itself towards heaven,

ven, and that thy grievous aches dry up the moisture of thy tongue, and cause thy lips to stick together ; for I mean not the prayers composed by art, but the holy affections and earnest sighs of the soul sent up to God. A groan of an oppressed soul, and a sigh from us by necessity, and a tear dropped from a penitent heart, are far more acceptable to him, than prayers of forty hours, that come forth of an hypocritical mouth.

When the prophet Moses saw himself inclosed between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea, he was so grievously perplexed, that he could not open his mouth ; but God heard the voice of his heart, and answered his silent request. King Hezekiah muttered as the crane, or as the swallow, and groaned as the pigeon ; and God had respect to his groaning and tears, and heard him from his holy sanctuary. The sighs of Jonah in the whale's belly mounted up through the waves of the sea, and ascended to the sacred habitation of God's glory. The cries of Jesus dying upon the cross have pierced through the bosom of our heavenly Father, and have moved the bowels of his eternal mercies. In short, God speaks thus of all his children, " Before they cry, I will grant them their request ; and as they shall yet be speaking, I shall have heard them." Therefore the royal prophet saith not only, " That God hath heard the prayers, but hath heard the desire of the humble ; thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." For that reason, when the apostle St. Paul makes mention of that Spirit that supports our weaknesses, and that teacheth us to pray, he saith, " That he crieth in our hearts, Abba, Father, and maketh request for us with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered," Rom. viii.

Take good courage, my brother, or my sister, and be not frightened at the sight of Death. Thou seest a narrow passage, a way all beset with thorns and briars ; but it is heaven's gate,

gate, and the way that leads to thy heavenly paradise; for we must of necessity march through a valley of tears, before we can enter into the city of the living God, Psa. lxxxiv. We must pass through many tribulations to come to the kingdom of heaven, Rev. vii. 14. Blessed are they whom God afflicts, for they shall be comforted, Matt. v. Blessed is the man that suffereth temptation; for when he shall be sufficiently proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God promiseth to them that love him, James i. The Lord sends thee that affliction, and this grievous temptation, not only for thine own good and salvation, but also for the benefit of others. By his wonderful wisdom he preserves the communion of saints, and so disposeth of every one, that we all contribute to the building of his tabernacle. Upon one he bestows riches, that he should be bountiful in alms deeds; to another he gives learning, that he might instruct the ignorant, and comfort the afflicted; he raiseth others to great honours and dignities, that they might be able to protect the innocent, and deliver the oppressed. Others are afflicted with desperate evils, and grievous and long diseases; and again, others are deprived of their most needful senses, as of their eye-sight, or of their hearing, that they might edify their neighbours by an holy constancy and christian patience. The ashes of poor Job have more lustre than all the gold and precious stones in the world. It is many ages since he endured grievous and dreadful calamities; nevertheless, his patience is yet proposed to us for our example, and to the end of the world it will always instruct the church of God. He teacheth thee by the evils which thou endurest, to be moved with mercy and compassion towards others in the same condition. For as he required, that the children of Israel should be gracious to strangers, because they had been strangers in the land of Egypt; likewise he sends to thee afflictions, that thou mightest pity the afflicted, and suffer with them, as members of the same mystical body. This
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appears in Jesus Christ our head ; for though the chief end of his sufferings was to redeem us, and to reconcile us to God the Father, nevertheless the Holy Ghost informs us, that he was like unto us in all things, sin excepted, that he might be a merciful High-Priest, and have compassion on our infirmities.

Finally, the affliction that grieves thee, is not only sent to thee for thy salvation, and for the instruction of thy neighbours, but also for the glory of the great and living God, who hath made and formed thee ; for we may say of every disease that happens to good men, as Christ says of Lazarus's distemper, " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified by it." Thou mayest be severe to thyself ; but thou must be charitable to others, and judge discreetly of thy brethren's afflictions.—When thou art in pain and trouble, think seriously upon thy miscarriages, and turn unto God with all thy heart ; but when thou seest others cast upon a bed of sickness, do not argue from thence, as David's enemies, that it is because they have committed some grievous crime ; rather consider, that it may be a means which God designs to employ to declare his power, and his servants' patience, faith, piety, and virtues. Therefore our Lord and Saviour tells the apostles, when at the sight of a man blind from his birth they inquired from him, Whether the man had sinned, or his father or mother, because he was born blind ? " That neither the man, nor his father, nor mother, had sinned, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him," John ix. By these words we are not to imagine, that they were without sin ; for there is none just, no, not one ; but we must understand, that they were not guilty of an heinous sin, nor had committed any such crime as had drawn upon them the vengeance from above. It was God's will that this poor man should come into the world with natural imperfection, that he might make him an in-

stance of his grace, and declare in him his almighty power ; and that our Saviour, in giving him his sight, might make appear that he was the true God, who fashions the wonderful eye, and that he was the true Light, that enlightens every man coming into the world, Psa. xciv. 9. John i. 9. Likewise when some came to inform this great and wise Saviour what had happened to the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, he replied in this manner, " Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things ? I tell you, Nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? I tell you, Nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke xiii.

God is glorified divers ways by the afflictions and calamities which he sends to his children : for, first, he justifies them before all the world from the calumnies which are cast upon them ; and he discovers thereby to all the sincerity of their love, and their unfeigned obedience. Satan accuseth us for serving God for the advantages which we receive in this life, Job i. because he is pleased to protect and favour us by his over-ruling providence. Therefore God removes many times from us that which is pleasing and delightful to the flesh ; he gives us the bread of affliction for our food, and the waters of sorrow for our drink ; he presents us with cups full of bitterness, and causeth his rod to return upon us often. By these grievous temptations he stops the mouth of the accuser of our brethren, who accuseth them day and night before God, Rev. xii. He declares by that means, to all the enemies of our salvation and of his glory, that we put our full confidence in God alone, and in his unchangeable promises, and not in the outward tokens of his mercy and favour. He shews to all the world, that the anchor of our hope

hope is not fixed here below, but that it is fastened in heaven, where Christ is entered as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 19.

As God is glorified in afflictions, he is also honoured by our deliverance. If the land of Judea had not been peopled with deaf, dumb, lame, blind, decrepit, and possessed with devils; if Eneas had not been sick eight years, Acts ix. if a poor woman had not been grieved with a bloody flux twelve years; if another had not been vexed with the disease that had bent her body; if the sick of the palsy had not been lying in his bed thirty-eight years; if the daughter of Jairus had not been dead; if the widow's son of the city of Nain had not been carried to the grave; in short, if Lazarus had not been buried four days—the glory and divine miracles of our Lord and Saviour had not been admired all over the world, Matt. ix. Luke xiii. John v. Likewise our desperate diseases, and our unexpected recoveries, when human skill can do nothing, declare to the most senseless souls that it is God alone that can give the wound and bind it up, and that leads to the sepulchre and brings back again, Luke vii. John ix. Job v. 1 Sam. ii. God's deliverances of his people from their afflictions are of two sorts; for either he takes away the burden from us, or he stretches out to us his merciful hand, and helps us to bear it; either he removes his affliction, and pacifies our grief, or he strengthens us with power and courage, and arms us with patience, and a generous resolution needful in such a case. This appears in a notable manner in the apostle St. Paul; for fear that he should be lifted up in pride, because of the excellency of his divine revelations, God gave him a thorn in the flesh, and sent the angel of Satan to buffet him, and to increase the bitterness and sharpness of his disease. This holy man prayed often to remove it from him; but God took not this thorn away from his flesh, nor did he check the messenger of Satan that afflicted him; but he delivered him in a more illustrious manner; for he strengthened him

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him with his divine Spirit ; enriched him with his graces ; he made him feel the virtue and power of Christ within him, and accomplished his virtue in Paul's infirmity : insomuch that this great apostle cries out in the sharpest of his afflictions, with transports of joy, " I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecution, in distresses, for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong : I can do all things in Christ that strengthens me," 2 Cor. xii. This may be also seen in the martyr St. Stephen ; for he was condemned to die a death the most painful and grievous that we can imagine ; but God gave him such powerful comforts, and filled his mind with such joys, that his face shined as that of an angel. You must understand the words of St. Paul in that manner, in his epistle to the Hebrews, Acts vi. Heb. v. Jesus Christ having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, was heard in that he feared : for he was not altogether freed from the sufferings and torments of the cross ; but he endured them courageously, and was more than conqueror in all things. He drank up the very dregs of the cup of God's wrath ; but by his divine power he overcame the strength of the poison. His heavenly Father took him not down from the cross, nor out of the hands of his murderers ; but he hath erected upon it his glorious trophies, and the cross hath been as his triumphant chariot. Likewise when you see a Christian bear up in the midst of a grievous affliction, and overcome his grief by his constancy and patience ; who instead of mourning rejoiceth, and comforts himself in his distresses ; you may then conclude, that such an one is strengthened by God's divine Spirit, who upholds him, and accomplisheth his heavenly virtue in his servant's infirmity. 'Tis is the most miraculous and excellent of all deliverances.

I confess, some approve this discourse very well, and admit these consolations in their ordinary diseases ; but as soon

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as any extraordinary and violent grief seizes upon them, they are apt to murmur against God, and to complain that their punishment is too grievous. Some proceed further, to curse, as Job, the day of their birth ; and, being brought into despair, are ready to cry out with Cain, “ My punishment is greater than I am able to bear.” Unhappy man ! wilt thou imitate the barbarous Heathens, who curse the sun when it burns them, and let fly their arrows against heaven when it thunders ? Wretched man ! what will it avail thee to affront thy Creator ? What advantage wilt thou reap from the blasphemies which thou belchest forth against the Sun of Righteousness ? Miserable worm of the earth ! contemptible dust ! wilt thou undertake to contend with God, to pluck him from his throne, and break the invincible arm of his power ? Dost thou imagine to stop the hand of his vengeance by offending and sinning against him ? Wilt thou quench the fury of his wrath by spitting in his face ? Believest thou that he will stretch forth his hand to deliver thee, and to increase thy blessings, whilst thy mouth is open to blaspheme him who is thy Sovereign Lord ?

Listen well, I beseech thee, friend, to my advice, and I will help thee out of the labyrinth where thou art unhappily entangled ; and, with God’s help, I will cause thee to understand that thou complainest wrongfully against him, who performs all things advisedly, and with justice and reason.

1. Run over the whole course of thy life, and consider how many wicked acts thou hast committed ; some by indiscretion, others wilfully ; how many words have escaped out of thy mouth, how many thoughts have been entertained in thy mind, against the commands of almighty God. Consider seriously the number and heinousness of thy sins and miscarriages, and thou shalt find that God’s punishments are far less than thy deserts ; and that for one sensible stroke of a

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be revealed unto us," Rom. viii. 18. When we cast our eyes upon the earth alone, we judge it to be very spacious and large. Our sight is lost in the contemplation of so many provinces, cities, and kingdoms ; but, when we compare it with heaven, we find it to be but a point. Likewise, when we look upon and reckon up the hours, days, weeks, months, and years of our sufferings, the time appears very tedious and long ; but, when we compare all these parcels of time with eternity, they seem to us but a moment. Though we should have been plunged in the depths of evils and miseries, from the first instant of our entrance into the world until the last of our going out, yet we have reason enough to say with St. Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not on the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv.

The only spring of all our comforts is God's gracious promise of seasonable help in time of need. Imprint therefore in your minds these divine passages: "When he that loveth me shall call upon me, I will answer him ; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him," *Psa. xci.* "The Lord delivers from all temptations them that honour him ; he is rich unto all that pray unto him," 2 *Pet. ii.* "He is near to all them that call upon him ; yea, to all them that call upon him faithfully," *Psa. cxlv. 18.* "He accomplisheth the desire of the humble, he hears their cry," *Psa. x. 17. cxlv. 19.* "The righteous is encompassed with many evils, but the Lord will deliver him from them all," *Psa. xxxiv.* "Call upon me in the day of thy distress, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." *Psa. 1. 15.* When a poor subject is courted and visited by his prince, in the time of his sickness, he looks upon it as a great favour and happiness indeed ; and when we enjoy the presence of a dear friend, whom we desired to

see, in the midst of our most grievous pains, we are wont to say, "Methinks I feel no more pain, now that I have this satisfaction of your good company." Now the glory of God's majesty accompanies the tenderness of his love. He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions. He is like that faithful friend that never forsakes us; for in our greatest calamities he succours us, Prov. xiii. He is the King of kings, and yet our most cordial and sincere friend, who frequently visits the houses of sorrow, and is near to every broken and bruised heart, Psal. xxxiv. The more we are oppressed with evil, the more he remembers us, Psal. cxxxvi.

Notwithstanding our children's imperfections and miscarriages, we cannot bear to see them in distress, but are moved with compassion, and persuaded to help them according to our ability: and shall thy God, who loves thee more sincerely and more cordially than the best of fathers, and the most tender-hearted mothers do their children, forsake thee in the day of affliction? This merciful and loving Father, who did take thee into his protection when thou didst enter into the world, and who since hath furnished plentifully to all thy necessities, shall he deny his most gracious assistance now in the time of this thy calamity? He who hath fulfilled his praise by thy mouth, when thou didst suck at thy mother's breast, who hath crowned thy youthful days with his divine blessings, he will not forsake thee now in thine old age. He will not cast thee off in the last moments of thy life, when thy strength is decayed, and thou art not able to help thyself.

When we offer any assistance to our sick and wounded friends, we labour to lessen their pain; we employ all our skill, and discover our most excellent secrets: at least, we endeavour to make them sensible of our displeasure and grief.

for their distempers by our sighs and tears, and by all good offices. Their complaints and groans are darts that strike us to the heart : likewise our merciful God is sensible of our calamities ; when he sees us oppressed with grievous pains, his bowels yearn, his heart is as it were moved, and his tender love for us is concerned. In all our afflictions he is afflicted ; and whosoever toucheth us toucheth the very apple of his eye, Hos. i. Isa. lxiii. He is said to weep and grieve at the torments that we feel, and to be sensible of our infirmities. He binds up our wounds, and pours into them his divine balm, Luke ii. He cures the diseased heart, and causeth the bruised bones to rejoice, Job v. He casteth into our beds of sickness his most excellent perfumes, and drives from thence all grief and displeasure. When a pestilential fever hath seized upon you, this heavenly Physician can give you some cordial waters, powerful antidotes to keep the poison from the heart, Jer. xxx. Ps. cxlvii. li. xxxiv. Cant. i. His gracious hand can drive from the soul the venom with which the old serpent labours to infect it. He will, in thy need, clap upon thy head, thy stomach, or rather to thine heart, not a bleeding pigeon, but the living and cherishing virtue of the Holy Spirit. Only discover to him the afflicted and diseased part or member of thy soul or body, and he shall anoint it with the oil of joy and gladness, that shall run down into thy joints and marrow. If thou feelest thyself weak or fainting, say to him, as the spouse in the Canticles, " Comfort my heart with wine," ch. ii. and he will not fail to present unto thee the new wine of his kingdom. If thou art thirsty, ask of him some drink, and he will give thee of that water, " which if a man drink, he shall never be athirst."

My brother or my sister, cast thyself upon God ; for his power is as great as his love to thee. He understands, better than thou or we can, what is expedient and good for thee. In his due time he will make thy pains to cease, and will pull
out

out of thy flesh its incommodious thorns; either he will drive from thee the spirit that afflicts thee, or accomplish his virtue in thine infirmity. He will strengthen thee in such a manner, and with such patience, constancy, and faith, and fill thee with so much extraordinary joy and comfort, that every one shall visibly perceive, that God himself is thy help, and that his virtue sustains thee. O how sweet and pleasant is God's assistance to a Christian soul! It brings along with it so much pleasure and admirable delight; it causeth such undeniable testimonies of our predestination to appear; it gives us so many rare foretastes of our celestial inheritance; that St. Paul prefers it not only to all the pleasures and honours of the world, but also to his being ravished into the third heaven, and to his seeing unspeakable things, which cannot be uttered, 2 Cor. xii.

If afflictions are increased with Christ, joy and comfort increase also with him: for as God commands wine to be given to a man whose heart is oppressed with sorrow, to drive away his sadness, and bury his troubled thoughts in oblivion; so in the greatest evils he supplies us with the strongest and most cordial consolations. It is on this occasion that he declares his greatest power, and pours out most plentifully his divine graces, Isa. ix. Though thou shouldest walk through the flames, the fire shall not burn or touch thee: for as the Son of God was in the furnace with Daniel's three companions in Babylon, Dan. iii. thus, in thy most violent fits of the fever, in the midst of thy most grievous aches, he will satiate thy soul, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, or as a living spring of comfort, that can never be stopped or dried up. Let the storms and floods beat against thee, let the defluxions endeavour to choak thee, Isa. lviii. thou mayest say with king David, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," Ps. xix. Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death;
though

though I should have no other help nor assistance in the world; though no more strength remains in my body, I would not fear; for, "O God, thy staff and thy rod will comfort me," Ps. xxiii. God will not only draw near to thy sick-bed; but he will embrace and receive thee in his protection, he will kiss thee with the kisses of his mouth, and make thee taste of the sweetness of his divine comfort, Cant. i. He will cherish thee as a mother doth her child to pacify it, and make thee so sensible of his love, that thou mayest say with the spouse, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." With his gracious hand he will wipe off that cold sweat, and into his bosom he will receive thy sighs and thy groans; and thy tears he will gather up into his most precious bottles. And as when drops of blood fell from him, the holy angels appeared to comfort him, Luke xxii. so in thy greatest and most difficult encounters, when thou shalt be at handy-blows with Death itself, his faithful ministers, his messengers, the angels of his right hand, shall visit thee, to supply thee with spiritual comfort, 2 Cor. v. Rev. v. And when these earthly comforters shall fail, he shall send to thee some of these powerful spirits that wait before his glorious throne, Dan. vii. O good God, if we could but perceive the things that are of themselves invisible, and if thou didst but give us eyes like to those of the holy prophet, we should perceive legions of immortal spirits flying about in the houses of sorrow, with an intent to assist the christian soul, Isa. vi. 2 Kings vi. Finally, as the sun, with the light and the strength of its beams, drives away the thickest clouds, and comforts with its delightful countenance the face of the earth; so Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who carries healing under his wings, banisheth all sadness with the light of his divine grace, Mal. iii. and with the presence of his holy Spirit expels away the most sensible griefs, and fills us with unspeakable joy, and with the peace of God, which passeth all understanding:

A PRAYER

*A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a sick Person, who desires
to prepare for Death.*

O ALMIGHTY and gracious God ! the Author of light and darkness, and the wise Disposer of good and evil, I acknowledge and adore thy hand, that thou hast laid me upon this sick-bed, to punish me for my sins. I cannot complain of thy justice, but rather I reverence thy wisdom and goodness; for I have deserved a severer treatment at thine hands, having abused thy mercies, and misemployed my health and strength in pursuing after worldly vanities and carnal pleasures more earnestly than after thy glory, or mine own salvation; for which neglect I am heartily sorry, and repent, and could willingly water this couch with my tears. O my God ! that knowest that this my grief proceeds from a sincere displeasure for having offended so gracious a Lord, who now in this correction discoverest to me thy tender compassion, in that thou rebukest me not in thy wrath; I take this distemper of body as a testimony of thy paternal love and care, since this is thine ordinary method of dealing with thy dearest children. I doubt not but it will prove to mine eternal advantage, in regard thou hast promised that "all things shall work together for good to them that love thee." I am willing to suffer these pains and aches, so that they may advance thy glory and my salvation. I refer myself to thy wise disposal; thou knowest what is most expedient for me; and I am sensible of thy power to restore me to life, and rescue me out of the grave. Thy blessing alone is able to give a healing virtue to all these potions, medicines, and receipts administered to me; but if it be thy pleasure to continue this disease, continue to me, I beseech thee, O my Redeemer ! the inward comforts and assistance of thine holy Spirit. Increase my patience, faith, and humility, that I may submit to thy sacred will. Remove from me all the grief and displeasure that renders me uneasy,
and

and fill my soul with thy peace, joy, and love; that now being separated from the society of men, I may lift up my heart and mind unto thee, my God; and withdraw them from these lower vanities. Grant that I may employ these few moments that thou affordest me, to prepare for my departure, to take a review of my former sinful life, to beg pardon, and repent, and to trust upon thine eternal mercy by a lively faith, that I may lay hold on thy salvation, and be able to say with David, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watch." My sickness seems tedious, but my sins have continued longer; and all this bodily pain and grief is nothing in comparison of the happiness that I expect in heaven. For what are those momentary sufferings in respect of the everlasting joys? Grant, I beseech thee, that this distemper of my body may turn to the health and safety of my soul, and may oblige me to consecrate the residue of my life to thy service, and to thy glory; that I may be weaned from the world, and resign myself into thine hands; that Christ may be gained unto me both in life and in death. But if it be thy will to put a period to my sorrows and sufferings by death, here I am, O God! ready to obey thy motion and will, without the least resistance or displeasure; for my troublesome abode, undermined by sickness, causeth me to wish for my departure. My soul is willing to forsake this infirm body; for thou hast prepared for it a more lasting and a glorious dwelling above. This couch, where I am now stretched, reminds me of the cold grave where I must shortly rest; and this death, that draws nearer and nearer to me, will free me from this chain of misery, put an end to all my grievances, and lead me out of this rotten lodge, to introduce me into the glorious palace of immortality, where thy divine Majesty dwells, and where I shall for ever glorify thee in the company of the holy angels, and sanctified souls. *Amen.*

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a sick Person tormented with violent Pains.

O FATHER of mercies, and God of all comforts ! look with an eye of pity upon my dreadful and sharp sufferings. Thou piercest me through with thine arrows, and fillest my soul with bitterness ; thy wrath is kindled against me, and thou increasest my sorrows and pains, both by night and by day. Sure my sins must be extraordinary and heinous, since they have provoked thee to deal so severely with me, who art mercy itself, and not willing to afflict the sons of men. O my God, consider my weakness and frailty, and let not thine almighty power and the fierceness of thy wrath be displayed against such an infirm creature as I am, a worm of the earth, dust and ashes ; nothing in comparison of thee, O infinite Being ! Remember that I am related to thee in thy blessed Son, and am thine adopted child ; vouchsafe me therefore thy favourable assistance, to put an end to my sorrows and sufferings, that are so excessive and extraordinary, that I could willingly speak as Jonas, “ Death is better to me than life :” for I am withered like parched ground in summer, and a violent heat consumes and tortures me. O when wilt thou, my God, who hast redeemed me from the torments of hell, rescue me out of these violent and bodily pains ? I will give a check to these indecent groanings and complaints, that become not such a sinful creature as I am. Thou art in this most just and righteous ; but I must cover my face with shame and confusion : for, were thy punishments far more grievous, were I cast into everlasting flames, I could have no cause to complain of thy severity, by reason of my sinful life. O my God ! my sufferings are great, but not to be compared with my Saviour’s, when the cold sweat and drops of blood fell down from his precious body. My grief is violent, but not to be paralleled with the glory that thou
hast

hast promised to thy chosen servants. O merciful Saviour ! thine heavy hand shall never hinder me from trusting and hoping in thee. I am persuaded, that this severe dealing is designed for my good and salvation ; and, in thine own time, thou wilt take away from me this bitter cup, that I may not drink up the dregs : nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. With this affliction, grant me grace and strength to bear it patiently, and let thy punishment be proportionable to my weakness ; and grant me an happy end and issue, that neither death, nor life, nor pain, nor torment, may ever separate me from thy love, or pluck me out of thine hand. My good God ! forsake me not in my distress, but comfort and assist me, and put an end to this bitter affliction. I am fainting, and my soul is weary within me :— vouchsafe to me thy divine consolations, the cordials of thy holy Spirit. My friends and kindred grieve and weep for mine affliction, but can give me no assistance. Thou only art my hope, thine hand alone can relieve and deliver me from my excessive grief and sufferings. Quench these violent pains that consume me, and remove me out of the reach of misery. I cannot but long for death, that will put a period to my torments, release me from mine affliction, and wipe away all tears from mine eyes. O my God ! when shall my crying and groans be changed into songs of praise and thanksgivings ? When shall I be admitted to the society of the blessed, who are escaped out of all tribulations, and have washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb ? Draw me, and I shall run after thee, and glorify thee for ever in thine heavenly temple. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIV.

The second Consolation against the Fears of Death is, to look upon God as a merciful Father, and to trust upon his infinite Goodness.

THERE is no child well descended, but desires earnestly to see his father's face, and especially the face of a good and gracious father. A great prince's son, who hath been brought up in a foreign country, rejoiceth when his father sends for him, to make him partake of the glory and dignity of his empire. He is not then grieved nor troubled; he seeks not to delay his departure, but rather embraceth, with transport of joy, the messenger of such good news. He thinks of nothing but hastening his journey: if he could borrow wings, he would fly with an unspeakable swiftness to his father's palace. Now we are the children of the great God, whose throne is heaven, and whose footstool is the earth: for our faith, that looks upon Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, considers God as our God and Parent: for to them, who have received this only Son of the Father, hath been granted the privilege of being the sons of God, to them who believe in his name, 1 John i. So that we have just cause to be transported in an holy excess of joy, with the apostle St. John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John iii.

We are by nature children of wrath, as others; but God, who is rich in mercy, hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. ii. He gives us the gracious assurances of this free adoption in this life; for as we are children, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, to cry, Abba, Father, Eph. i. This Holy Spirit bears witness

with our spirits that we are the children of God. If we be children, then heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ, Gal. iv. Yea, if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him, Rom. viii. That we might be the children of God, he hath not only adopted us by Jesus Christ, but also regenerated us with incorruptible seed. We are not born of flesh and blood, but we are born of God. His infinite goodness moved him first to grant us a being, and his incomprehensible love hath inclined him to reform our beings, and reprint his divine image in our hearts, John i. 1 Pet. i. He hath begotten us by his pure grace, by the word of his truth, that we might be the first-fruits of his creatures, James i. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us," 1 Pet. i.

Now though we be the children of God, and the apparent heirs of his crown, our glory and dignity is not to be discerned during the years of our earthly pilgrimage. Our heavenly Father suffers us here to live in a contemptible state in the eyes of the world, that we might learn humility, and long more earnestly for his celestial inheritance. As it happens in a dark and obscure midnight, men tread under feet pearls, diamonds, sceptres and crowns, as dust and dung; and now that a gross ignorance overspreads the world, the children of God, the most precious jewels of his crown, are esteemed no better than the scum of the filth of the earth. This consideration causeth St. John to tell us, "Beloved, we are now the children of God; it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. As David sent for Absalom out of the Philistines' country, and gave him leave to dwell in the city of Jerusalem; but for the space of two years he would

would not suffer him to enter his royal palace, or see his face: thus God hath freed us from the devil's tyranny, and hell's power; he hath admitted us into his holy church, which is as his Jerusalem, where he gives us a foretaste of our heavenly peace and reconciliation; but he delays for a time our reception into the magnificent palace of his glory, and to the enjoyment of his divine presence, our highest satisfaction and greatest happiness. While we remain in the body, we are at a distance from God, so that we are saved but by hope, 2 Cor. v. But when we shall depart out of this body we shall be with the Lord, and shall enter into a real fruition of his celestial inheritance, Rom. viii. Finally, while we dwell here below, we may see the image of our heavenly Father, and behold his face as in a glass; but when he shall admit us near his throne, we shall see him face to face, we shall be transformed into his likeness, and be fully satisfied with his resemblance, Rom. i. 1 Cor. iii. xiii. Psal. xvii.

Let Death be ever so frightful and ill-favoured, it is the messenger of our heavenly Father; and if we can have the confidence to open its iron hands, and look into them, we shall find gracious letters, full of love, by which this Father of mercy calls us to the full enjoyment of our eternal happiness. Death not only invites us to God, but serves as a ship to convey us through this tempestuous sea of the world to our Redeemer, who expects our coming at the haven of everlasting rest: it is like Elijah's chariot of fire that carried him up to heaven, 1 Kings ii. If Death covers our eyes with one hand, and deprives us of the light of the sun with the other, it rends in pieces that veil which hinders us from the sight of those excellencies of God's immortal sanctuary, and discovers to us the glorious face of the Father of light. With the one it digs for our bodies a grave to cast them in, but with the other hand it flings open for our souls the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, to introduce them into the banqueting

queting hall. Therefore Death should be so far from frightening us, that its arrival should rather comfort us, and cause us to resolve to follow it with an holy cheerfulness. For we should not only be willing to go to God, with transports of joy, when he is pleased to call us to behold his face, and to eat of the bread of eternal life in his heavenly kingdom; but of our own accord we should be impatient to enjoy his glorious presence, and in a continual longing to see that happy day that shall bring us to him, and satisfy us with unspeakable delights. A true Christian should be moved, on this occasion, with David's spirit. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

I confess, that this great God, before whom we are to appear, is clothed with glory and majesty, and dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, 1 Tim. vi. I know that he sits upon a dreadful throne of fire, whereof the wheels are like a burning flame, Dan. vii. That thousand thousands wait upon him, and ten thousand millions stand before him, Isa. vi. I am not ignorant, that at his presence the earth is moved, the sea and the rivers dry up, the mountains tremble, and the little hills shake, the rocks shrink, the pillars of heaven fall, and the seraphims cover themselves with their wings, Rev. iv. But let not this dreadful majesty, and heavenly pomp, terrify thee, O believing soul; for this great God is full of fatherly affection for thee. Round about this throne of God there is a beautiful rainbow, of a green colour, like to an emerald; to signify that God is reconciled, and that the covenant of our peace is to continue for ever. As out of his magnificent throne proceed thunders and thunderbolts that fright the worldlings, and cast the proud souls down to the ground; so from thence proceed also lightnings, and such refreshing flames, as are able to comfort the believer,

and

and to direct him to his celestial inheritance. We are related to God more than the angels and seraphims; for we are not only his creatures and servants, but also his children and the members of his Son; nay, we are one with him, John xvii. Let us therefore return our hearty thanks to our heavenly Father, who hath made us meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i.

Let us go with confidence to Mount Sion; for there are no signs of God's wrath, nor his just vengeance, to be seen. We shall find no boundaries to keep us off from God; but we shall find assurances of love to invite and unite us unto him. We shall see no fire to devour and scare us; but we shall perceive the comfortable flames, which burn without consuming, and which bring consolation rather than fear. We shall not meet there a terrible lawgiver to drive us from him, to terrify us with his thunderbolts; but we shall meet a loving Father, to embrace and open to us the bosom of his tender compassion. In short, we shall not hear there the terrible sound of the trumpet, that causeth the rocks to split asunder, that flings to the ground the proud cedars, and makes the deer cast their young; but we shall hear the sweet and melodious voice, that will quiet our trembling souls, refresh our languishing spirits, and fill us with peace and eternal consolations, Heb. xii.

I acknowledge that God is just; but he is also merciful, and his mercy rejoiceth over judgment. His justice is like an exceeding high mountain; but his mercy may be compared to the bottomless deep, Ps. xxxix. Therefore Moses, who had seen God more than any living man, cannot be satisfied to extol and magnify his infinite mercy, and the overflowing riches of his love. He names him but once *just*, but many times he calls him "merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth," Exod. xxxiv. It is not unworthy of our observation, that the words *righteous* or *just*,
attributed

attributed to God, often signify also merciful, gracious, and loving, in the holy tongue. It is true, God holds in his hand the sword of his justice ; but he is girded and clothed with his mercy, as with a garment. In short, God is not only good and merciful, but he is also goodness and mercy itself, 1 John iv. His compassion and tenderness is far greater than that of the best fathers and mothers, as he himself declares by the prophet : " Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, they may forget ; yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palm of my hand, yea, in the bottom of my heart, Isa. xlix. These fatherly compassions force him to let fall the sword of his justice, as he tells us in Hosea : " How shall I make thee as Admah ? how shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together : I will not execute the fierceness of my anger," chap. xi. Therefore David had good cause to be persuaded, " that though his father and mother should forsake him, the Lord would receive him." If all love, kindness, and mercy, were totally banished out of the earth, and all natural affection should be extinct, my God will not forsake me while I live, and at the hour of death will receive me into his bosom, and cover me with his wings. Christian souls, let not the sad remembrance of your former sins and miscarriages discourage you. For when we appear before the throne of God's majesty, we must not trust upon our own righteousness, nor be puffed up with the fancy of our merits, but we must place all our assurance and hope in the mercy of God alone. We must imitate Daniel, who speaks thus of himself, and of his proceedings, " We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies," Dan. ix. The compassions of God are our merits. While God hath store of compassions, we shall not want merits, (St. Bern.) Now God's mercies and compassions can never fail : they renew every morning ; his faithfulness

fulness is very excellent, Lam. iii. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his ways, and live," Ezek. xxxiii. I am he that blots out all thy sins for my own sake, and will not remember thy transgressions," Isa. xiv. Though your sins and iniquities appear to you with all the deformity and ugliness of hell, be not overcome with grief, nor cast yourselves into despair. Let us rather say with the prophet Jeremiah, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens." Or let us speak in the language of Micah, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will come again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," Mic. vii. Let us comfort ourselves with the words of the prophet Daniel, "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, tho' we have rebelled against him."

Tell me not again, I know that God is good and merciful, but my sins are too many to believe that he will vouchsafe me a pardon, and have mercy upon me. And after many repeated vows, after many groans, sighs, and tears of repentance, I have returned as a dog to his vomit, and as a swine to wallow in the mire, 2 Pet. ii. But, wretched sinner, learn for thy comfort, that if thy sins should be as many as the sand by the sea-shore, or as the stars of the sky, Isa. xlv. if thou dost most sincerely repent of them with a contrite soul, God will blot them out as a cloud, and will cast them into the sea. For God's mercy has no bounds, and his compassions are infinite, Mic. vii. When thy brother has offended thee, if he ask forgiveness, the Lord commands that thou shouldst pardon him, not only seven times, but seventy
and

and seven times, Matt. xvii. How much more reason hast thou to believe, that God, who is goodness and mercy, will pardon thee more sins, and oftener ! Therefore instead of examining thy miscarriages, accept of the precious balm of divine consolations, and say with the royal prophet, " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name ; bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed ; the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy ; he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever ; he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities ; for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him ; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," *Psa. ciii.*

Do not answer me, that your sins are so heinous and abominable, that you cannot expect a pardon : for if they be as high as the proudest mountains, if thou art really sensible of their weight, if they make thee sigh and groan, *Lam. v.* God's infinite mercy, like a deluge, shall cover and wash them away ; or, like a torrent, it shall transport them out of thy sight ; for when sin abounds, God's grace shall superabound, in case there be true repentance, *Isa. i.* Though your sins were as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they should be as red as vermilion, they shall become as white as wool. All the offences that you are guilty of, since you were in the world, are finite and limited, but God's mercy is infinite. " O Lord, if thou shouldst mark iniquities,

quities, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," Psa. cxxx.

He that hides his transgressions shall not prosper, but he that confesses and forsakes them shall obtain mercy, Prov. xviii. It is certain that there is no sinner ever so guilty, that shall seek to God's mercy by a true repentance, but shall obtain his request, Ps. cxiii. David had defiled himself with an infamous adultery, and imbrued his hands in the blood of one of his most faithful servants; but as soon as he had made request to God with a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, his good and merciful Creator cleansed this foul sinner from all his guilt, at the fountain of his infinite mercy. He made him whiter than snow, and comforted his bruised bones. This consideration caused him to cry out, "I said, I will confess unto God my transgressions; and thou, O God, hast taken away the punishment of my sin." King Manasseh had been addicted to devilish arts, and to the most abominable and heinous idolatries, 2 Chr. xxxiii. Nevertheless, as soon as he sighed in his chains, his prayers and his groans found a gracious reception at the throne of grace. The poor publican in the Gospel, being ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, struck upon his breast with this expression of his penitent soul, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Luke xviii. And God looked upon him with an eye of mercy, and stretched out unto him his gracious hand, so that he departed to his home justified. The penitent Magdalen was inwardly grieved at her former filthy and debauched behaviour, so that she came and cast herself at our Saviour's feet, watering them with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head, Luke ix. But Christ soon lifted her up with these comfortable words, "Thy sins are pardoned; thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace." St. Peter, by frailty, that should cause the best Christians to tremble for fear of falling into the same apostacy, denied his Lord and Master three times, with cursing and swearing,

Matt. xxiv. But this merciful God looked upon him with an eye of compassion, and gave him grace to repent most bitterly of such a foul crime. I doubt not, but at the same time that St. Peter poured forth his tears in God's presence, he poured into his heart the oil of joy and gladness, and comforted him most effectually by his divine Spirit. Likewise, though your sins be never so grievous and abominable, if your souls be touched with displeasure, if your hearts be truly penitent, so that you shed sincere tears of repentance, in case you are heartily sorry for the want of a sufficient grief for your sins, in case you prostrate yourselves before your heavenly Father, he will raise you up again by his infinite goodness, he will cast all your sins and transgressions behind him. He will cry unto you inwardly, by the voice of his holy Spirit, "My son (or my daughter) thy sins are forgiven thee," John v. He will fill your souls with an unspeakable joy, Luke ix. and will cause you to sing with the psalmist, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile," Ps. xxxii. Finally, think not, that it is ever too late to repent, and, when death is upon our lips, that it is no time to seek to the mercy of God. As the business of repentance cannot be too soon, because we know not when God will call us to himself, it is most certain that it can never be too late. For at what time or season soever the poor sinner melts into tears of repentance, in case his repentance be real, and his tears proceed from a penitent heart, God will always have the arms of his mercy wide open to receive him. The thief crucified at our Saviour's side was at the last gasp when he was converted; and when he uttered this excellent expression, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom," Luke xxiii. our good and merciful Saviour granted his request, and encouraged him with the most excellent and comfortable promise that could be expected; "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

paradise." In like manner, when thou art at the point of death, if God speaks to thee, and awakens thy conscience, it is an infallible sign that he hath compassion on thee, and that he will not destroy thee. It is a sign, that he opens for thee his heaven, full of light and glory; and offers to thee his paradise, with all its divine excellencies. Doubt not, penitent sinner, but that this is the acceptable day, the day of salvation, and the time of God's good pleasure. Since this good God draws so near thee, thou mayest with freedom draw near him: and since he beats and knocks at the door of thine heart, it is an infallible token, that thou mayest also beat at the door of his eternal mercies, and that he intends to open and satisfy thee. In short, at what hour soever we go to God, and appear before his throne, he stretcheth out to us the golden sceptre of his favour, that we should obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Long and elaborate speeches and prayers are needless to persuade God to vouchsafe his grace and seasonable help in such an urgent necessity. It is not necessary that we should compose them with the arts and industry of human wisdom. We need but pray to God, as unto our father, and weep in his bosom; we need but open to him our hearts, and call ourselves his children. That alone is sufficient to move him to compassion, and to stir up his fatherly affections, to appease his anger, and to draw upon us his most excellent blessings. The prophet Isaiah, the most eloquent of the men of his time, seeks no other argument to persuade God to have mercy and compassion, but this: "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory: Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? Are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer: thy name is from everlasting," Isa. lxiii. Likewise after

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he had made this confession, "We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away; and there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities," chap. lxiv. he adds, "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are thy clay, and thou art our potter, and we all are the work of thine hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people."

By this gracious and loving title of Father, the prodigal son is persuaded to be able to oblige his parent to have compassion on him. "I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." Thus, though we have forsaken our heavenly Father, mis-spent the riches of his grace, and lived a filthy and profane life; nevertheless, if we can be moved with a serious and true repentance, and say to him, from our heart, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son;" he will forget all the miscarriages of our youth, and will pass by all the offences that we have committed out of ignorance or mistake; nay, he will blot out all our wilful and deliberate sins; he will not only embrace us when we shall cast ourselves at his feet, and in the arms of his mercy, but he will meet and receive us as his dearest children. He will kiss us with the blessed kisses of his fatherly love. He will give to us his holy Spirit, that shall seal us for the day of redemption, and shall assure us, that we are admitted to the liberty, and all the privileges, of his children. He will shoe our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and will vouchsafe us all the assurance of our entire and perfect reconciliation.—He will clothe us here upon earth with robes of righteousness

ness and holiness, and in heaven he will bestow upon us uncorruptible robes of immortality and glory. In this life he will give us the foretastes of eternal happiness, and in the life to come he will lead us by the hand into the banqueting-chamber, and will cause us to sit there at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with all the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Out of this celestial abode all murmurings and complaints shall be banished ; but here shall be rejoicing and gladness for the conversion of poor sinners, and for their admittance into the kingdom of heaven. God himself shall invite the holy angels and blessed spirits to share in these public rejoicings, saying to them, " We must rejoice ; for these my children were dead, but now they are alive ; they were lost, but now they are found again."

Let the miserable slaves of the devil, and of their filthy lusts, tremble at the approaches of Death, and let them look upon God as a dreadful judge, Rom. ii. For our parts, we have not the spirit of bondage to be again in fear ; but we have the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Let the sons and daughters of Adam, who have no other being in life but that which they have received with their corrupt nature, fly from God's presence : for our parts, we, that are regenerated by the Spirit of the second Adam, will draw near to him with boldness. We will not say as Adam, disturbed and frightened at the consideration of his crime, " I heard thy voice ; I was afraid, and hid myself," Gen. iii. but rather, having been brought up in the schools of the prophets and apostles ; and having learned that we must prefer our obedience to God's will to all other things whatsoever ; we shall say to him, with Samuel, " Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," 1 Sam. iii. Or rather, we will address ourselves to him in plainer terms : O my God, and heavenly Father, speak when thou wilt ; for thy servant is ready, and resolved to obey thy command. We will not stay till God shall call the

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fourth time, as that holyman, 1 Sam. iii. who, because of his tender and unexperienced years, could not distinguish between God's voice and that of man ; but we will have our ears always open to his divine orders, and at the first motion and summons of his will we shall be ready to follow him, as the children of Israel were in the wilderness, when they raised their camp, and marched at his motion, Numb. iii.

And as, when the Levites stopped and put down the ark in its place, 2 Chron. iii. Moses uttered this prayer, " O Lord, give rest to the thousands of Israel ;" likewise you, believing soul, whom God hath chosen for his ark and temple, as soon as you shall perceive the least sign of death, speak with an holy confidence and joy; Rejoice, O my soul ; the time of thy freedom, and of thine eternal rest, approacheth. Here is the messenger of good news ; here is Death, that will usher me into the glorious palace of my heavenly Father. " Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy son, that thy son may glorify thee," John xvii.

When the hour was come that our Lord Jesus Christ was to get out of the world to the Father, he said to his disciples, who were grieved for his departure from them, " If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father ; for my Father is greater than I," John xiii. and xiv. Christian souls, speak in this manner at the hour of your departing. If such as are about you happen to weep and lament, if they endeavour to move and stop you, by the consideration of flesh and blood, say unto them, Why are ye grieved at my deliverance, and at the end of my misery ? Why should you hinder and retard my glory and happiness ? O how cruel is your love ! How blind and inconsiderate is your affection ! Certainly, if ye did love me as ye ought, ye would prefer my satisfaction, and the accomplishment of my happiness, to the small advantage that ye gather from my abode

with you. Ye should consider, that the least part of the joy that I shall feel in my heavenly Father's house, is a thousand times more worth than all the pleasure of the earth, than the honours of the age, and the pomp and glory of the world. My friends, or rather my enemies, let me go ; for I go to my Father; I go to behold his face, which is the most divine satisfaction; I go to take possession of an inheritance prepared for me from the foundation of the world, John xx. Matt. xxi.



A short PRAYER and MEDITATION for a Christian who prepares himself for Death, by relying on the Mercy of God the Father.

MY God and Creator, I perceive, by the symptoms of death, that my departure is at hand, and I am summoned to appear before thy dreadful tribunal! The remembrance of my former heinous sins cannot but terrify me, when I view myself dust and ashes, and thine infinite being and divine perfections. When I compare my wickedness and guilt with thy superlative excellence and holiness ; how can I, who am but as straw and stubble, stand before a consuming fire? If I should see thee, O my God, upon thy glorious throne, surrounded with millions of immortal spirits, armed with thunderbolts, and encompassed with flames of fire, and those of Mount Sinai, I should not only tremble for fear, but fall into despair, and fly from thee, as my first parents ; or, as Moses and Isaiah, be dismayed, and deplore my unclean nature, not fit to draw near to so holy a God. But, O merciful Father ! thy glorious presence is not without some tokens of mercy. I see a rainbow round about thy throne, an assurance of my peace and reconciliation. I dare therefore draw near the throne of thy grace, from whence thou reachest to me the sceptre of thy infinite goodness, and speakest to me in a language full of love and compassion, to comfort me, to revive my drooping spirits, and fill me full

of hope and confidence of my future happiness and salvation. Since, therefore, I see about thee, O my God, no such terrible mark of thy wrath, I will no longer yield to the spirit of bondage, that inclines to fear; but will be persuaded by the spirit of adoption, to cry unto thee, Abba, Father. For I am thy child, and co-heir with thy blessed Son, who hath reconciled me to thee by the blood of his cross, when I stood as an enemy at a distance. But now that I am so nearly related to thee, wilt thou deny me mine inheritance, purchased for me by Christ? O heavenly Father, I know mine offences are heinous; and if thou didst treat me with severity and justice, I could expect nothing but the eternal flames. Yet I am assured, that thou dost not delight in the death of sinners, and hast promised to accept my penitential tears and amendment. And though my sins be many and grievous, O let thy grace and mercy be magnified in the pardon of them. I am persuaded that thy compassion will receive and embrace me, as a father his afflicted child, and put far from me mine offences. Return then to thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord is gracious unto thee, and is ready to admit thee into his eternal kingdom. I understand therefore Death's summons to be the voice of my Lord and Father, who calls and commands me to come unto him. I will follow the example of the prodigal son, and speak in his language; "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." I confess, O my God! that thou hast not been sparing of thy manifold blessings to me; but I have not employed them as I ought, to thy honour and glory. The temptations of the world have too much prevailed upon me, and my wicked inclinations have drawn me away from thy service, to gratify the corruption of my nature. In this sinful state that I am in, I fly to thee for mercy and pardon. Have compassion on me, my heavenly Father, whose tenderness for me far exceeds that of the most tender-hearted parents. I am fully persuaded,

sua^ded, that thou wilt not reject me ; but art ready to embrace and meet me on the way, as the father of the prodigal son. O unparalleled love ! O infinite goodness and condescension ! I am confident to find it in thee, my God, and to be partaker of it ! I doubt not but that thou wilt quiet my troubled spirit with a gracious reception, clothe me with the robe of thy righteousness, and entertain me in thy glorious palace, where I shall be admitted to solemnize the marriage of the Lamb, designed as an offering from the foundation of the world, in the happy society of angels, and immortal spirits, where we shall glorify thee, and be everlasting monuments of thine infinite goodness and mercy. O admirable wisdom, in disposing of thine elect ! We were lost creatures, but we shall be found in God : we were dead in our sins ; but by death, which we had drawn upon ourselves, we shall return to life. We are cast into the most horrible state ; but thereby we shall attain and be advanced to the highest felicity. O my God ! I recommend unto thee my soul, as to a faithful Creator : Heavenly Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. *Amen.*

CHAP. XV.

The third Consolation against the Fears of Death is, to meditate continually on the Death and Sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to trust upon the Merits of his Cross.

IF we desire to die with a peaceable and quiet mind, we must always meditate upon the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and rest upon the merits of his cross. For the death of this Prince of life is the model of ours, and the fountain of comforts and joys of a believing soul.

1. By looking upon this perfect example, the wonder of men and angels, we learn to endure, with an holy resolution

and patience, all the evils and pains that attend upon death. For though our Saviour's torments were excessive, so that his soul was *sorrowed unto death*; though there issued out of his innocent body a bloody sweat, from the violence of his grief, Luke xxii. yet out of his mouth came not forth the least sign of repining or impatience, Isa. iii. He was led to the slaughter as a lamb, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb.

2. From hence we learn, that the last hours of our life must be employed in fervent and continual prayers to God, since this Beloved of our Father offers to him at such a time his prayers and supplications, with strong crying, and a flood of tears, as to him who was able to deliver him from death, Heb. v. In the bosom of this heavenly Father he poureth out all his grief; and three times he presents his request, "Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it," &c.

3. We learn also to present ourselves before God's divine majesty with humility, and to resign ourselves wholly to his adorable providence: he who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, he whom the millions of angels and seraphims worship continually, judged it no disgrace to himself to fall upon his knees three times to the ground, and submit his will to that of his heavenly Father. For after that he had said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me:" he adds these words, "Nevertheless, O Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt," Matt. xxvi.

4. If, at the time of our death, an excessive sorrow, or a malignant humour, seize upon our minds, and hinder us from seeing the heavens open, or God, who stretcheth out his arms to receive us into his rest; let us remember, that this merciful Lord speaks to us as he did to his three apostles, who slept when he was in his agony, "Cannot ye watch one hour with me?"

me?" Matt. xxvi. My dear children, it is not time to fall asleep with the foolish virgins; trim your lamps, put on the garments of light, to meet your celestial Bridegroom, and to enter with him into the marriage chamber, Matt. xxv.

5. God requires that we should do as much good at all times to our friends as we are able, and to express the sincerity of our affections to those to whom nature and religion have caused us to be related. But chiefly at the hour of death we are more bound to this religious duty. Therefore Jesus Christ hath shewn us an excellent example; for when he was nailed on the cross, and ready to breathe forth his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, he took care of his holy and blessed mother, saying to his beloved disciple, "My son, behold thy mother; (and to her) Woman, behold thy son."

6. We ought to do good, and shew kindness, not only to our friends, but also forgive our greatest enemies, such as are the most enraged against us. For by this means we shall follow the blessed footsteps of our gracious Saviour; for he had compassion upon them that crucified him, and mocked him. "Father (said he) forgive them, for they know not what they do."

7. By the cross of Jesus Christ, we learn to put our trust in the goodness of God in our sharpest pains, and to embrace him as our most loving Father and Redeemer, at that instant when he seems to discover to us a severe countenance, full of wrath. For this eternal Son of God, in his most violent tortures, when his heavenly Father withdrew from him his aid and assistance, and withheld the effects of his grace, the expressions of his love, and the comforts of his divine Spirit; yet he looked upon him as his God, and prays to him with an holy assurance, repeating these words, "My God! My God!"

8. If we will die willingly, and leave these infirm bodies
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with a joyful mind, when the time is come that we must go to the Father of spirits, we ought to remember with what resolution our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ prepared himself for death, and how willingly he commended his innocent soul into the hands of God his Father, when he required it. "No man taketh this life away from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father," John x. Heb. x. This caused him to speak in this manner. "Here I am, O God, to do thy will," Luke xxiii. Therefore, when he gave up the ghost, he cried with a loud voice, to shew that his precious soul was not taken from him by violence, but that he willingly offered it up as a sacrifice to God.

9. In this excellent description of Christ crucified, we may farther learn, what should be our last words, and our last thoughts. For if God grants us the use of our tongues until the last moment, we cannot end our life more comfortably, than by such expressions as our Saviour made use of upon the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." But if we cannot move our lips, nor pronounce these words, we ought to have them inwardly in our minds, and express them with the motions of the heart.

10. In looking exactly into the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may easily find how much we are engaged to yield up our souls to God, when he is pleased to call for them. For his blessed death is the price and ransom that he hath paid for them. Now, if it be reasonable to render unto every one that which he has bought and purchased with a great price, and if it would be a great injustice to refuse to any man that which he hath paid for with the blood of his only and beloved son, how can we refuse our souls unto God, since they belong to him? Because he hath not only created them, and stamped in them his image, but hath also purchased

chased them with the blood of his only Son, in whom, from all eternity, he is well pleased. We must not therefore imitate the examples of ill pay-masters, or unjust possessors of other men's goods ; we must not expect until our souls be plucked from us by violence, but rather, like the good and righteous debtors, we ought to return them willingly, and yield them up into his hands, who hath paid for them an infinite and invaluable ransom. David was of this mind when he said, " Into thy hand I commit my spirit ; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth," Psa. xxxi.

11. From this death and passion of our glorious Redeemer, we understand not only our duty, but also find sufficient grounds of comfort and hope : and suffer me to say, it is in the bowels of this dead Lion, that we meet with the sweetest and most ravishing consolations. This Chief Priest, who bears us upon his breast in his heavenly sanctuary, or rather in his heart, will not forsake us in the day of our distress, nor yield us up to the fears and pangs of death. For since he hath encountered with this cruel enemy, since he hath felt its stings, its shiverings and pains, and hath been tempted as we have been, in all things, sin excepted ; he is merciful and faithful to have compassion on our infirmities ; he is no less able to assist us in our temptations, and to make us in all things more than conquerors.

12. Believing souls, consider with me the noble expressions of St. Paul : " Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," 1 Cor. i. These excellent truths may be very well applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Holy Ghost names the " Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession," Heb. iii. For
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the comfortable assistances which he hath received from God, in the time of his greatest anguish, are precious tokens and infallible assurances of God's future help in our need. For as when he was in his bitter agony, when his soul was cast down with a deadly sorrow, an angel from heaven came to comfort him; so likewise, when we shall be engaged in an encounter with Death, when it shall endeavour to fill our souls with sadness and apprehensions; he will, doubtless, send to us some of his good angels, that be at his right hand, I mean the faithful teachers of his holy word; or else he will send from heaven some of his blessed spirits that stand about his throne, who are commonly employed in the assistance of the faithful. The Holy Ghost himself, the comforter of afflicted souls, and the true oil of gladness, will then drive from our hearts all grief, and revive us with his heavenly comforts. He will not forsake us, till he has brought us to the head-spring of eternal joy and comfort.

13. Our Lord and Saviour's deliverance from death, is in some respect an image and assurance of our future deliverance, which we are to expect from God's mercy and almighty power. For as when St. Paul saith, That this High-Priest, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save him from death, "and was heard in that he feared;" we are not to understand, that he was altogether freed from death, but rather, that he had the favour granted to him of swallowing up Death in victory, and of triumphing over the powers of hell; and that through the shame and bitterness of death he is entered into his glory, and into the joys of his heavenly paradise; likewise when we pray to God in our greatest distresses and deepest sorrow, when we pour into his bosom the tears of a sincere repentance, he hears us from his sanctuary, and delivers us from death; not by hindering us from dying, but conveying our souls through death into an immortal life; from suffering into happiness.

14. To be fully persuaded that God will not withhold from us the joys and comforts of his holy Spirit ; and that he will make us more than conquerors of Death, by admitting us into an eternal felicity ; we need but cast our eyes upon this great God and Saviour : for as he who grants a great deal, will not refuse a little ; so God, who has not spared his only Son, but hath delivered him for us all to an ignominious and cruel death, how shall not he with him freely give us all things ? St. Paul hath taught us to argue in this manner, and to gather this necessary consequence of God's proceedings, Rom. viii.

15. When Christ our Lord gave up the ghost upon the cross, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, heaven was opened, and a repenting thief was admitted. All this was to teach us, that we may enter into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he hath consecrated ; by the veil, that is, his flesh ; that this merciful Lord hath always his arms wide open to receive us ; and that he will never refuse the glory of heaven, and the delights of his paradise, to the greatest sinners, who, repenting, have recourse to him by his eternal mercy and infinite merits.

16. The death of this great God and Saviour is the payment of all our debts, and the expiation of all our crimes : it is the healing of all our diseases, the freedom of all our miseries ; for it hath overcome Satan and the powers of hell : it is the death of an eternal death, the meritorious death that hath purchased for us heaven, and all its excellencies ; and procured to us a right to God's paradise, and to its delights and pleasures ; in short, it is this death that introduces paradise into our souls before we enter into paradise, and fills our minds with an heavenly and divine peace, and an unspeakable and glorious joy.

17. This

17. This cross of our Saviour may be compared to the wood which Moses cast into the waters of Marah. For it takes away from the natural death of God's children whatsoever is incommodious and bitter, and causeth us to relish sweetness and comforts that cannot be expressed. It is like the salt which the prophet Elisha cast into the waters of Jericho, to make them wholesome and fruitful; for it causeth that death itself proves our salvation, and brings to us unspeakable comforts. I may also liken it to the meal which the same prophet cast into the pot, of which the sons of the prophets had made this complaint, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!" It is the death of Death, because it removes from it all deadly poison, and causeth us to relish angelical satisfactions. I may therefore say of this glorious cross, That it is the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*; because it makes known and understood the dreadful evils from which we are delivered, and the infinite advantages which are procured to us by Christ's death. I may call it also the *tree of life*; for every one that gathers of the fruit of this tree with the hand of faith, and eats of it, shall live for ever, John vi. Believing souls, it is that mystical ladder which Jacob saw in a vision; for it unites heaven and earth, sinful man with his God, Gen. xxviii. It pleased the Father to make peace by the blood of his Son crucified, and to reconcile all things to himself, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven, Col. i. It is by the means of this blessed cross, that the good angels are sent to our assistance, and that all the graces and blessings of God are procured to us. By this cross we shall ascend up to God, and to his eternal happiness. Under the shadow of this divine cross our souls rest, and enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding. It is like the golden sceptre which king Ahasuerus stretched out unto Esther. For if we touch this precious cross with the hand of faith, if we embrace it with a contrite soul, we shall obtain from the King of kings, not only the half part, but all his kingdom, with all its delights, honours, and advantages.

18. Moses's rod was changed into a serpent, and so were the rods of Pharaoh's magicians, but his serpent devoured all the rest. Thus the death of the Lord and Saviour is accompanied with sorrow, fear, and anguish; but these fears swallow up all other fears, and cause us to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace. His sorrows drive away all our griefs, and fill us with joy and eternal comfort. His anguish gives ease and satisfaction to our souls. His troubled mind is the cause of the settlement of our consciences. His drops of blood wash away our tears. His groans hinder us from sighing, and his strong crying causes us to sing with joy. The fetters of this glorious Redeemer have purchased our freedom; and his condemnation our absolution. He hath been content to drink vinegar mingled with gall, and to swallow the very dregs of the cup of God's wrath and justice, that he might cause us to drink of the rivers of his divine pleasure. He cried out in the violence of his grief, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. that God might never forsake us, and that in our greatest troubles we might have always his fatherly and powerful assistance ready at hand, he stooped down his head to raise our hopes. In short, he died, that he might deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to a cruel and insufferable bondage, Heb. ii. So that all such as tremble, and are afraid at the approaches of death, have not yet felt the power and efficacy of the cross of our Lord Jesus. They trample under foot the blood of the Son of God, and as much as in them lies they render the fruit and efficacy of his blessed death of no effect.

19. Consider well, christian souls, and imprint into your minds this lesson: Remember that death is never to be feared, but when it is attended with God's wrath, and the curse of his law, when our sins and offences have supplied it with offensive weapons; when the devil, who seeks to devour us

as a roaring lion, follows Death at the heels; and when at the same time hell opens its infernal jaws to swallow us up. But those who have placed their faith and hope in the death and passion of the Saviour of the world, and who embrace his cross, are exempted from all its fears, and out of the reach of all its poisonous darts.

20. My beloved souls, be not therefore frightened to see the face of the great Judge of the world, 1 Tim. ii. because we have such an excellent Mediator between God and man, namely, the man Christ Jesus, who hath given himself a ransom for all, Rom. iii. He hath disarmed God's eternal justice, and stopped the proceedings of his vengeance. For God hath appointed him from all eternity to be a propitiation, by faith in his blood. The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son, as he is Son of man, John v. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Whosoever believes in him, shall never come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life, Rom. viii.

21. Fear no more the thunderbolts and the flashes of fire of Mount Sinai; neither tremble when you hear its terrible thunder, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them," Deut. xxviii. For though Christ's hands were nailed and fastened to the wood, they plucked out of the hands of God's justice his terrible thunderbolts, and the sword of his vengeance. The precious blood that runs down from the wounds of this divine Redeemer, quenches the scorching heat of his consuming fire and flames. As at the time of our Saviour's passion he had a care of his disciples, and therefore he desired those that came to take him, "If you seek me, let these go," John xviii. likewise he hath now a care of all such as believe in his name, to secure them under the shadow of his cross. He takes their place, and for them he stands before God's justice, saying,
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Since you have taken me to be their pledge, and have pursued me without mercy ; and since I have sufficiently satisfied for their crimes, and tasted for them the most bitter and cruel death ; suffer them to enjoy the freedom that hath been purchased at such a dear rate. Suffer them to pass through death into the enjoyment of a blessed life, which is the price of my blood, and the fruit of my victories. 'This merciful Redeemer hath put himself, of his own accord, in our stead ; and hath endured in his own person all the pains which were due to our sins. He hath been struck with Moses's rod, and pierced through with the darts of the law ; he hath been made a curse for us ; for it is written, " Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree," Gal. v. But we are not only by this means redeemed from the curse of the law, but we are also blessed in him with all manner of heavenly blessings. When we were without Christ, we were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world. But we who were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, we have access with confidence by faith in his precious blood ; so that we may go with boldness to the throne of grace, to find mercy and help in time of need, Heb. ix. Rejoice, therefore, christian souls, for you are not come to the mount that might not be touched with hands, nor to a burning fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more ; but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven ; and to God the Judge of all ; and to the spirits of just men made perfect ; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant ; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel : for Abel's blood called for vengeance against his brother, Heb. xii. Col. i. but the blood of Christ

Christ pleads for mercy, pardon, and forgiveness, for them who were his enemies, in their understandings and wicked deeds. And if, when we were enemies, we have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life and intercession ?

22. Never fear the devil, nor all the powers of hell ; for according to God's ancient promise, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. The Lord of glory hath spoiled the principalities and powers ; he hath made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on his cross, Col. ii. By his death he hath destroyed him who had the empire of Death, that is, the devil ; so that he hath crushed to pieces this red dragon, that devoured whole nations and people, Heb. ii. Rev. xii. As it happened when the children of Israel looked up to the brazen serpent set up by Moses in the wilderness, they were perfectly cured of the bitings of the fiery serpents : thus wretched sinners, who feel the venomous and deadly wounds of the old serpent, cast the eyes of your faith upon Jesus Christ crucified, and you shall be saved from death, John iii. As when the angel destroyed the first-born of Egypt, he had not the power to meddle with the children of Israel, who had sprinkled their doors with the blood of the paschal lamb : so the devil, who destroys the children of this world, hath not the power to touch those whose hearts and consciences are washed in the blood of this spotless Lamb. And as Pharaoh, and all the Egyptians that followed him, were overwhelmed and drowned in the waters of the Red Sea, Heb. x. which served as a passage to the children of Israel to their promised land : thus Satan, and all his wicked spirits, are, as it were, swallowed up in the precious sea of Christ's blood, which opens to us a way to the celestial Canaan. Rejoice, ye heavens, and you that dwell in them ; for the accuser of your brethren is cast out, who

who accuseth them day and night before God; but they have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, 1 Pet. i. Jas. iv. Christian souls, resist the devil, and he will fly from you. If he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, be not troubled at his fury, nor at his infernal power; for he is tied to a chain that he cannot stretch nor break; he hath been overcome by the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Take therefore the shield of faith, that you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil, Rev. vi. and to speak to him with an undaunted spirit, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou hast no part in me; I belong to the Lord Jesus, who hath paid my ransom, who hath redeemed me with his blood, and sealed me with his Spirit. The gates of hell have no power upon those who are built upon the Rock of Eternity, Matt. xvi.

23. Let not your sins cast you into the abyss of despair, and drive you from the anchor of your hope. For God hath so loved the world, that he hath given his only Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick, John iii. Our Saviour is not come to call the just to repentance, (such as are puffed up with a vain conceit of their own righteousness,) but sinners, who acknowledge their faults, and are sorry for them. The sacred arms of our Redeemer, that were stretched wide open upon the cross, are yet stretched wide open to receive us; and from the highest heavens, where he dwells, he causeth these comfortable words to be heard, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. This merciful Lord is come to seek the lost sheep, to save such as were perished, and to redeem his people from their sins. As by one man sin came into the world, and by sin death; thus death is come upon all men, for they have all sinned: likewise by the obedience of one, we are
become

become conquerors over death, Rom. v. and we have obtained the gift of righteousness and immortality. It is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, who hath made an atonement for all our iniquities, John i. For as the ram that was caught by the horns in a thicket, was offered up to God as a burnt-offering instead of Isaac, Eph. v. thus the true Lamb of God hath been offered up unto God upon the cross for us, as a burnt-sacrifice well pleasing unto him. He hath borne our iniquities in his body upon the tree, and by his stripes we are healed, Isa. liii. He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon him. As Aaron put upon the live goat Hazzael all the sins of the people, Lev. xvi. God hath made him who knew no sin, to be made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. Acts x. Whosoever believes in him, shall receive remission of sins in his name. Therefore, rather than run into despair, as Cain, Abithophel, and Judas, let us cry out with king David, "O blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered! O blessed is he unto whom the Lord imputeth no sin!" Ps. xxxi. Or let us burst out into St. Paul's language, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," Rom. viii. Let us therefore embrace this crucified Jesus, and say with the blessed Virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;" or, with the glorified spirits in heaven, "To him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, be glory and strength for ever and ever." *Amen.*

24. Consider, souls, if the vast number of your sins come into your remembrance, consider that it is not said, that the blood of Christ cleanseth us only from a certain number of sins, but "that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just (that is, true and merciful) to forgive us our sins; and that

that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sins." Let them be never so numerous, drown them all as so many hellish monsters in the blood of thy Saviour. Take hold of this divine Jesus with the arms of faith and repentance. Wrap yourselves up in his winding sheet ; repose yourselves upon his cross ; and rest secure in the shadow of his almighty intercession.

25. But if the heinousness of your crimes fright you, take hold at the same time of the horns of this mystical altar, and all the powers of hell will not be able to pluck you thence. Comfort thyself, sinful soul ; for there cannot be a spot so black or so deep, but the blood of Christ is able to wash it clean away. There is no crime so abominable, but the sacrifice of this Lamb without spot, that taketh away the sins of the world, can make an atonement for it. Let thy sins be never so great, they have their limits ; but thy Redeemer's merits are without any limit, and the efficacy of his sufferings continue for ever. To assure thee of this truth, and to encourage thee, he was pleased upon the cross to discover the riches of his mercy upon a wretched robber, who suffered then by the hands of justice for his crimes. As soon as he saw him moved with repentance, he changed his infamous and painful cross into a paradise of glory and happiness, and filled his soul with the sweetest comforts of his holy Spirit. This merciful Redeemer is the same yesterday, and to-day, and shall be the same for ever. Therefore, if thou art reckoned amongst the most filthy and abominable sinners, if thou dost groan under the burden of thy sins, and art moved with contrition, Heb. xiii. thou oughtest not to cast off thy hopes, and be discouraged ; draw near with humility to thy Saviour's cross, and wash thyself in the blood that comes out of his veins. All the diseased persons that entered the pool of Bethesda, were healed of all manner of distempers, John v. Thus all spiritually diseased, are cured in this divine pool of

all their griefs. It is not necessary to stay till a good angel comes from heaven to move the waters; for Christ's blood is always fresh, living, and of the same virtue and efficacy. We need not fear, that others should step down before us, or that the throng should hinder us; for a thousand worlds may be all healed at the same instant. Neither can we pretend, that there is nobody to cast us into this mystical pool; for our Lord will never refuse to admit you. When you shall have been bed-ridden eight and thirty years, as the poor man that was troubled with the palsy; and when you shall be nailed to a cross, as the good thief; you may nevertheless dip yourselves into the divine pool, and feel its saving and healing virtue. It doth not only wash away the filth, and heal all thy diseases, but it gives also life to the dead, and renders the living immortal. Whosoever thou art that dippest thyself in this precious blood, thou mayest say with the apostle St. Paul, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief, 1 Tim. i. Howbeit I have obtained mercy; the Lord will deliver me from all wicked works, and will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom; to him be glory for ever and ever, *Amen*. 2 Tim. iv.

26. You understand therefore very well, believing souls, that you have no cause to fear Death, since all its darts have been broken to pieces, all its armour hath been torn, and its spoils appear so visibly upon Christ's cross. You may see the claws of this old lion, the paw of this devouring bear, the teeth and poison of this infernal serpent, and the head of this prodigious dragon; you may see Death swallowed up in victory, and the Prince of Life leading it in triumph. Follow then the glorious chariot of this noble Conqueror, saying with the apostle, "O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory? The sting of Death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but blessed be God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv.

27. Therefore, when God shall draw near to you, under death's veil, be not terrified ; seek not to run from him, and to hide yourselves from his all-seeing eye, unto which darkness is as the noon-day, Gen. iii. Though you are by nature poor, wretched, blind, and naked, you have more substantial garments than fig-leaves ; for you have the leaves of the tree of life, that are designed for the salvation of the Gentiles, Rev. xxii. The leaves that shall never fade shall cover all your nakedness, and adorn your immortal souls. For it is the eternal righteousness, the most accomplished righteousness of our Lord Jesus, who hath been made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. It is Jesus Christ himself, who is named, "the Lord our righteousness." It is the precious garment of salvation, the glorious cloak of righteousness mentioned by the prophet, Isa. lxi. It is the wedding garment whitened in the blood of the Lamb without spot, and the fine and bright linen, which are the righteousness of the saints, Ezek. xvi. In short, it is a garment which will not only cover and adorn you, but will also heal all your infirmities, and advance you to immortality, Rev. vii.

28. If you come before your heavenly Father with this perfumed clothing of your elder brother, Jesus Christ, Gen. xxvii. or rather, if you be clothed with him as with a garment, Rom. i. you shall not only obtain the best and most advantageous blessing, but you shall enter into the possession of the incorruptible inheritance, prepared for you from the beginning of the world. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. vi.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a Christian, who strengthens himself against the Fears of Death, by meditating upon the Death and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

O MERCIFUL Saviour ! who hast taken our mortal nature, that thou mightest offer it up as a sacrifice to God, vouchsafe me thine assistance, and an increase of thy faith and hope, now that I am threatened to be devoured by death. I embrace thy cross and passion as my only relief. I take hold of the horns of this altar, and claim an interest in thy sufferings and righteousness. How grievous were thy torments, O blessed Redeemer ; which made thee sweat drops of blood, required the comfort of angels, and drew from thee strong crying and tears. But thy death was not as mine, as the departure of thine holy martyrs, who went willingly to execution with expressions of joy. Thy death was an atonement for the sins of the whole world ; but ours can yield no satisfaction to the divine justice ; it makes us capable of reaping the fruits of thine eternal compassions and mediation. Thou sufferedst the heavy strokes of God's wrath, and tookst upon thee the load of our sins ; but we, instead of this consuming fire, quenched by thy precious death, perceive in our death the flames and motions of thy love. Instead of the hand of thy vengeance, we meet here with the embraces of thy mercy, ready to admit us into eternal happiness. Death appears to us armed with our sins, and the dreadful consequences of hell and damnation. But I see all this armour hanging upon thy cross, as the everlasting trophies and monuments of thy glory. Thou hast been pierced with the darts of a cruel death, suffered the terrible thunderbolts and curses of the law, and thou hast drunk the dregs of the cup of God's fury for our sakes, that thou mightest conquer sin, death, and Satan, and free us from the curses we have deserved. O wonderful Saviour ! thou hast spoiled principalities and powers, showing them openly, and triumphing over them on the cross.

cross. How marvellous are thy works, and worthy of the continual admiration of men and angels ! What extraordinary benefits do I reap from thy blessed passion ! Thy violent sufferings are preventions of my torments ; thy bruises and wounds are my safety and cure ; thy fears comfort and settle my mind ; thy distressed soul fills mine full of joy ; thy crying appeases the troubles of my conscience ; and thy drops of blood wash away my tears ; thy bitterness is my sweetness, and thy death my victory, and thy cross my triumph. I shall no longer tremble at the approaches of death, since thou hast purchased for me life and immortality ; and the kingdom of heaven is thine by a two-fold right, as thou art the Son of God, and heir of all things ; and as thou hast paid for it a valuable price, by thine infinite merits. The first is sufficient for thee ; by the second we have a claim to this kingdom, and shall possess it as the fruits of thy death and sufferings. My hope is in thee, O blessed Lord ! suffer me not to fail in my expectations. I know that nothing impure shall enter into thy holy city ; but thy blood shall wash and cleanse me from all my sins. O glorious Lord ! how wonderful art thou, and how precious is thy death, the atonement of my crimes, and the ransom of the whole world ! It is our peace with God, our reconciliation with heaven, and with the angels of light. In a word, it hath not only rescued me out of an abyss of misery, from an eternal damnation, and the endless torments of hell ; but it hath purchased for me heaven and its glory, and paradise with all its unspeakable delights. And the method thou hast taken, O victorious Son of David ! to accomplish this, deserves our admiration. By thine own death thou hast conquered Death ; and by entering into its dark prison, hast given to Death its mortal wound : Thy cross therefore, to me, is as Jacob's ladder, where at the bottom I may sleep secure from sin, and the fears of the grave, and by it ascend up to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need. . It is the source of sweetness,

ness, comfort, and joy, and of the noblest future expectations. It is a perfect example to instruct me how to die well, and how I ought to be prepared when I leave the world. Grant me grace to imitate thee, to express to all my relations that cordial affection and tenderness which I find in thee, to forgive my greatest and mortal enemies, to pray for my persecutors, to submit with patience to thy will ; to behave myself with courage and resolution, with zeal and affection for thy glory. Here I offer myself at thy disposal. My soul belongs to thee, as its Creator and Redeemer ; for thou hast ransomed it, washed and sanctified it, clothed it with thy righteousness, and put it into a capacity of entering into thy heavenly sanctuary, and of appearing before the Father of lights. Take into thy custody, O sweet Jesus, who hast been crucified for me, a wretched sinner. Grant, I beseech thee, that I may for ever live and reign with thee in glory, in thine eternal kingdom. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVI.

The fourth Consolation against the Fears of Death is, to meditate often upon our Lord Jesus Christ in his Sepulchre.

MAN naturally abhors and hates the sight of graves. Some cannot pass by a churchyard, without expressing a distate and dread. Not only they who make their abode in glorious palaces and stately dwellings, but also they who reside in poor huts, or in pitiful cabins ; they who are shut up in black dungeons, or exposed to the injury of the weather, who have no other covering but the sky, can never think upon death without fear, when they call to mind, that this body must go into the bowels of the earth, and lie down in a stinking and noisome grave.

If we will banish from our souls this dangerous apprehension and needless fear, we must consider seriously, with a religious application, that we ought never to abhor the earth; because our bodies have been made of earth; it hath been, as it were, the mother from whence we proceeded.

We must also consider, that it is the general rule of nature, that all compounded bodies must return, at their dissolution, every part to its first principle. Therefore, as the soul ascends up to its first source, and returns to God who gave it; likewise it is no wonder if the body returns to dust, because it proceeds from dust, and God hath pronounced a sentence in the earthly paradise, which shall never be revoked; "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return," Gen. iii. Nicodemus inquired of our Lord Jesus Christ, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" John iii. This ridiculous and improbable conceit is proved, in a manner, to be true on this occasion; for we must enter again into the womb of the earth, our common mother, that we may be born again, and pass into another life.

It is not amiss to consider often the notable representations of death mentioned by St. Paul, in the xvth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. For our bodies are as the seed which is cast into the earth, that it might bring forth. "O fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." It cannot flourish until it rots. The students of nature inform us, that the generation of one thing is the corruption of another. On this occasion we may affirm, that the corruption and dissolution of this wretched body is the means and way that leads to a more glorious generation. You that weep for the decease of your friends and kindred, when you see them laid in their graves, remember what David saith, They that sow in tears, shall reap with songs of joy, Ps. cxxvi.

Consider,

Consider, That death is the way of all flesh, and the grave is the last retreat which God hath appointed for all living: so that if we be loth to enter into the tomb, we must desire Almighty God to grant us a lodging by ourselves, to change the common course of nature, or to create for us another world.

Now the sepulchre is not only the general rendezvous of all mankind, but it is a couch where they rest after their laborious and painful race. Therefore, when the prophet Isaiah speaks of the death of good men, he saith, "They enter into peace, they rest in their beds," Isa. lvii. For when he looks to the blessed state of their souls, he tells us, that they are entered into that great and eternal peace that reigns in heaven. But when he casts an eye upon their bodies, he said, "they rest in their beds." For this cause the places appointed to bury the dead are named *sleeping places* by the Greeks, to teach us, that they are fallen asleep, in expectation of the great morn when God shall awaken them with the sound of the archangel's trumpet.

Therefore when Jacob was ready to give up the ghost, he commanded his son Joseph not to bury him in Egypt, "that he might sleep with his fathers," Gen. xlvii. Likewise Job speaks in the same manner, "I shall sleep in the dust of the earth," Job vii. And God used this language unto Moses, "Thou art going to sleep with thy fathers," Deut. xxxi. And to David, "When thy days be fulfilled, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers," 2 Sam. vii. And when the prophet Daniel speaks of such as were deceased since the creation of the world, he saith, "They sleep in the dust of the earth," Dan. xii.

Particularly take notice, christian souls, that when God spoke to Moses from the midst of the burning bush, he told him, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," Exod. iv. They had been dead many ages before ;

fore ; nevertheless, God names himself their God. "Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," Matt. xxii.—Those holy men were not dead in regard of their souls ; for they are immortal, and God hath admitted them into eternal bliss. Their bodies also, to speak properly, were not dead, but slept in their graves ; as our Saviour said of Jairus's daughter, "The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth," Matt. ix. And of Lazarus, "Lazarus our friend sleepeth," John xi. Moreover, we may justly say, that the condition of our bodies in the grave is better, and more pleasant, than our daily sleep ; for when we rest in our beds, we are often disturbed in our fancy ; we labour and sweat, and the richest and most magnificent couches are not free from this evil ; whereas in the grave our bodies are at rest, and secure from all sense of pain, and enjoy a perfect sleep, and a rest without disturbance.

The greatest princes, and the proudest monarchs, are constrained to take up their lodging, one after another, here in this house, which God hath prepared for all living, and to repose themselves on that couch, which is to receive all the sons of Adam. When the sacred history gives an account of the kings of Judah and of Israel, it adds, at the end of their life, "he slept with his fathers." Let us be ever so wretched, poor, and miserable, we shall be entertained in this dwelling of kings, and lay ourselves down upon their beds ; therefore when Job, through the grievousness of his pain, complained because he had not died immediately after his birth, he said, "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept ; then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves, or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver."

It is in this house, and upon this couch, that the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, and generally all the faithful, rest, who have lived in all the ages of the world ; as

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It is recorded of St. Stephen, when he commended his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus, that "he fell asleep." Acts vii. Therefore, when St. Paul reproves the Corinthians, and acquaints them that God hath punished them with divers diseases and death, because they had profaned the Lord's supper; he tells them, "For this cause many are feeble and sick amongst you, and many sleep." And when he speaks of all those that were dead in the profession of Christ's religion, he saith, "They sleep in Jesus:" and he names them, "they that sleep." Now, we are not better and nobler than the saints of paradise, to expect that our bodies should receive a better and more favourable entertainment than they.

In short, there is nothing more able to remove from our fancy that horror of our graves, than the consideration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who did enter into the earth like other men, and laid himself down there. He hath sanctified and perfumed that place with his divine presence, and hath made it the object of our desires, and the cause of our glory. For there is no subject but thinks it an honour to lodge in his prince's chamber, and to lie down and sleep upon the bed where he hath taken his rest, though he hath remained there but a moment, or an hour. O blessed tomb, where death and life, disgrace and glory, are lodged together, and where the Prince of Life, the Author of all honour and happiness, rested himself.

Christians, who desire to banish from your souls all fears of death, and apprehensions of your graves, look upon your sepulchres in the same manner as if you should see there Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, the Prince of your Salvation, yet remaining asleep. When old Jacob heard the mistaken news of the death of his son Joseph, he was overcome with a violent grief, so that he cried out, "I shall go down with sorrow to my son into the grave." But the certain news of the

death and burial of the true Joseph will fill us full of unspeakable comforts, and will cause us to speak in another manner, I shall go down to my father into the sepulchre with joy. The prophet Elisha raised to life a child which was laid in his chamber upon his bed ; when he stretched himself upon it, the soul that was departed came again. And Elisha raised another in the same manner, by applying his mouth to the child's, his hands and eyes to his. But, believing souls, God works for you, on this occasion, a far more wonderful miracle : for our resurrection and life proceed from the death and burial of our great Prophet. If we go into his holy tomb, if we lay ourselves down upon his precious body, if we embrace it with a true and lively faith, and a serious repentance, he will quicken us again, and cause us to become immortal : for he hath been pleased to enter into the state of the dead, with an intent to procure us a blessed and a glorious immortality.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a Christian who strengthens himself against the frightful Aspect of the Grave, by looking upon our Lord Jesus Christ laid in his Tomb.

O WONDERFUL Mediator between God and man ! Thou art God immortal, and yet hast vouchsafed to take upon thee our mortal nature, and to die for me a miserable sinner, and to remain for a time in the state of the dead, that thou mightest procure to me a blessed immortality. Give me grace to meditate as I ought upon thy sacred body, wrapped up in a winding-sheet, and laid in the earth. For by this means, sweet Jesus, I shall be reconciled to the sight of the grave ; I shall look with a stedfast and settled countenance on the pit into which I must enter, when thou shalt appoint it. For the servant is not greater than his Master. It belongs not to the

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creature to prefer itself above the Creator. Since I expect to share in thy glory and exaltation, it is but just and reasonable that I take some part in thy disgraces and abasement. My reason, assisted by thine holy Spirit, teacheth me that I must be content to be wrapped up in thy darkness, and remain with thee in the valley of the shadow of death, since I hope to be clothed one day with light, and crowned with an eternal life. I must not only look upon the grave without fear, but I shall consider it with joy, in regard thou hast honoured it with thy holy presence, and perfumed it with thy divine and celestial odour. I shall look upon it, as if thou didst yet lie down in it, as if I were to keep thee company there, my Lord and my God. A dead man returned to life again, when he did but touch the bones of thy prophet; but I do not only touch the Prince of prophets, but embrace thee by faith, as thou art for my sins, and as resting in thy grave for my salvation. Thou shalt therefore make me sensible of thy divine virtue, put in me the seeds of immortality, and raise my hopes up to heaven. My soul hath already a share in the first resurrection, and one day this infirm body shall return to newness of life. If my resurrection be not so quick and speedy, as that of the dead raised to life by the prophet, it shall be far more glorious and lasting, that I may bless thee with all thy saints, and praise thee for ever, with thine inheritance in heaven. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVII.

The fifth Consolation against the Fears of Death is, to meditate upon the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

AS there is nothing more grievous and insufferable, than to behold a proud and insulting enemy, who is always victorious, and whom none can overcome in his insolent and
braving

braving humour; likewise there is nothing more pleasant and comfortable than to see such a pride cast down, and to triumph over such an enemy. Therefore the children of Israel, who had long groaned under the cruel tyranny of Pharaoh, sang with joy a song of thanksgiving, when God destroyed that wretched tyrant, and buried him and his army in the waves of the Red Sea. For this cause when the red dragon, the ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan, Rev. xii. who seduceth whole nations, was overcome and cast down from heaven to the earth, there were songs of joy and gladness heard in heaven, Rev. xii. "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night; therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them."

From hence let us conclude, christian souls, as it was a grievous affliction and a sensible grief, to behold Death tyrannizing over all the world, and shutting up in its dungeons kings and monarchs, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and generally all the children of Adam, of what condition or degree soever; likewise it is a great comfort, and unspeakable joy to us, to behold this cruel and proud enemy brought down, overcome, and disarmed; to see our Lord Jesus Christ marching out of Death's fortifications, loaden with its spoils. Rejoice, therefore, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them; for the murderer of our brethren is swallowed up in victory.

We, who are the members of this great Conqueror, have a share in this honour and glory: in his person, we are conquerors of Death, so that we may say with the apostle, "That God hath quickened us together, and raised us up with him."

This Prince of life hath not only loosened all the bands of
Death,

Death, and broken to pieces all its chains, but he hath led away Death in triumph, and made it subject to his celestial empire. He hath an absolute power over Death, as he himself declares in these words, "I am he that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, *Amen* ; and have the keys of hell and of death."

For it stands with reason, that if this invincible Lord, when he was in the prison of Death, commanded over Death itself ; if he broke in pieces its iron bars, and its brazen gates ; if he caused the dead to go out, and led them into the holy city ; now that he is out of the grave, a victorious Conqueror, he must needs command with an uncontrollable power this dreadful enemy, which he hath already overcome, and brought under by his almighty hand.

O Death ! fret and foam out thy rage and fury ; I see that thou art tied as a prisoner to the triumphant chariot of Jesus Christ my Saviour ; and I am certain, that thou canst do nothing without leave, and that thou canst not go a step, unless he lengthen thy chain.

As Joshua, when he had overcome the kings of Canaan, called for his captains, and spoke to them in this manner, "Come near, and put your feet upon the necks of these kings ; fear not, nor be dismayed ; be strong, and of good courage ;" likewise, we may imagine, believing souls, that our divine Joshua, the conqueror of Death, calls to us from heaven, 'Tread upon this wretched Death with boldness ; fear not, nor be dismayed.

The children of Israel, who trembled at the threatenings of Goliath, were freed from all apprehensions, when they saw him fall with a stone from David's sling, so that the most timorous could have freely put their feet upon his neck.

And

And shall not you, Christians, banish from your hearts all fear and dread of Death, now that you see it is cast down at the feet of our true David, that great shepherd and bishop of our souls? For though it opens its jaws, and foams out flames of fire, it hath, nevertheless, received the stroke of Death, and is at the last gasp.

And as the servant of Jonathan, the son of Saul, dispatched and killed those whom his master had cast down; thus, we need but pursue the glorious victories of the Son of the King of kings; or rather, we need but gather up the pleasant fruits of his conquests. For this Prince of life, that hath overcome Death for us, offers to overcome it also in us, with the weapons with which he arms us. In short, to speak properly, there can be no death for such as are incorporated in Jesus Christ by a true and lively faith. For he that lives, and believeth in him, shall never die; and he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, John xi.



A PRAYER and MEDITATION for the believing Soul, who arms herself against the Fears of Death, by meditating upon the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD Jesus, who hast been fully declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, and who livest for ever and ever, strengthen me in my weakness, comfort me in my sorrow, and drive from my soul all fears and apprehensions of death. O wonderful Saviour! I need no longer dread this cruel and proud enemy; for thou hast broken all its fetters and chains, and hast overcome Death and the grave. O glorious and triumphing Monarch! shall I tremble before a discomfited and disarmed enemy, whom I see lying under my feet, and chained to thy triumphing

triumphing chariot? I need but follow the sacred footsteps of thy victory, and gather its excellent fruits. If thou hast been able to deal with Death when thou wast shut up in a dungeon, if thou didst then bring down its pride, and carry away its prisoners; what may I not expect from thy victorious and almighty arm, now that thou hast in thy hand the keys of hell and death? O most mighty and merciful Lord, thou hast not only overcome death for me, but thou wilt also overcome it by me, who am thy child, and the sheep of thy pasture, whereof thou hast paid the ransom. Thou art not only raised from the dead, but thou art also the resurrection and the life. Thou art the Prince of life, the Lord of glory and immortality; so that he that liveth and believeth in thee shall never die; and whosoever believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—Samson's act was admirable when he slept until midnight, rose up, and carried away the gates of Gaza upon his shoulders up to an high mountain. But who would not admire thee, O invincible Nazarite, who having slept until the third day in the bowels of the earth, didst rise again by thy divine virtue, carry away the gates of hell, and make them to become the gates of heaven, and the entrance into the celestial paradise! Let me die, since the Redeemer liveth, and intends to introduce me into an happy life, purchased for me with his most precious blood, and secured for me by his glorious resurrection. *Amen.*

CHAP. XVIII.

The sixth Consolation against the Fears of Death is, the Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God.

IT is indeed a great joy and comfort to behold a cruel and proud enemy overcome and disarmed, and ourselves freed,

freed, by that means, from the heavy yoke of his insufferable tyranny ; but our joy would be turned into grief, and our comfort into sadness, if we did but perceive at the same time, the Author of our freedom choaked with his own blood, and breathing out his last gasp at the moment of his victory. It is requisite, to render our satisfaction complete and perfect, that his triumphs might be everlasting, and that he might be advanced to the highest glory and sovereign empire. Now there is no enemy more cruel and terrible than Death. We have beheld it disarmed upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and perfectly vanquished and subdued by his glorious resurrection. But if with the eye of our faith we look a little higher to the glorious ascension of our divine Saviour, we shall see the same Death bound to his triumphing chariot, and this conquering Redeemer exalted above the highest heavens, and sitting gloriously at the right hand of God ; we shall see him invested in an almighty power, adored by all creatures ; we shall see him commanding not only all the angels of light, and the celestial spirits, that are about his magnificent throne, but exercising dominion also over the world, over death, the devils, and hell. Because he hath been " obedient unto death, yea, to the ignominious death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth," Phil. ii. " And that every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Every soldier shares not always in the triumph of the general, and all the subjects taste not of their prince's happiness ; but as we are the brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the members of his mystical body, we have a share in his triumph, and in the glory of his empire. Therefore the apostle St. Paul informs us, " That our life (that is to say, our glory and eternal felicity) is hid with Christ in God." In another

other place he tells us, in express words, "that God who is rich in mercy hath made us sit in heavenly places with Jesus Christ."

This glorious Saviour is gone to take possession of the kingdom of heaven not only for himself, but also in our names, and for us. Therefore he informs the holy apostles, and all true believers, "That in his Father's house there are many mansions; I am going to prepare a place there for you." In the same manner he speaks in that admirable prayer, in which he consecrates himself to God, for the great work of our redemption: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." For the same reason, St. Paul tells us, in his epistle to the Hebrews, for our comfort, Heb. vi. that Christ is gone into heaven, *as our forerunner*.

The high-priest of the Jews entered into the earthly sanctuary, to present himself before God for the people, Heb. ix. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ is gone into the heavenly sanctuary, to appear for us in the presence of God. The high-priest of the Jews carried upon his breast and shoulders the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; but Jesus Christ hath engraven us upon his heart, according to the prayer of the spouse in the Canticles, ch. viii. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is as strong as death." The high-priest of the Jews did cast off the names of the twelve tribes with the robes; but neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, Rom. viii.

The royal diadem that was put upon Esther's head never caused her to forget her people and parentage; she was mightily grieved for Haman's conspiracy, and the decree which he had caused the king Ahasuerus to sign and seal with a signet. I may likewise say, that the glory to which

our Lord Jesus Christ is now raised, can never make him forget the people that he hath redeemed with his blood. He is not unmindful of Satan's plots, nor of the sentence and doom pronounced against us by the great Monarch of the world, and confirmed by his great seal. His glorious head may be crowned with the rainbow, but his merciful heart is inflamed with love for us. He thinks it no disgrace to acknowledge us for his brethren, and to pray to God for us, who sits upon his throne, where thousand millions wait upon him, and ten thousand thousands worship him. He is able to save to the uttermost all such as draw near to God through him; for he lives always to intercede for us. If the Father hath always granted him his request, when he was in his greatest abasement, can we imagine that his intercession will be fruitless, now that he is ascended up to the highest glory?

From this exaltation to heaven, he beholds all our encounters and our strugglings with Death. He sees all the enemies that assault us, and the dangers unto which we are exposed. He is acquainted with the deep malice, and crafty designs, of the enemies of our salvation. He perceives all the darts that they let fly against us. Therefore he covers us with a shield, and will not suffer us to be overcome by temptation. He fulfils his virtue in our infirmities, and makes us more than conquerors. He hath an eye always upon his flock, he holds his sheep all in his hand, and none is able to pluck them from thence.

When he was upon earth in his agony, at this word, that dropt out of his mouth, *I am he*, John xviii. his enemies fell backward: and when he was in Death's prison he forced it to obey him. And shall not he, now that he is exalted up to the highest heavens, in the glory of his triumph, have the same command and power over Death, the world, and hell? When he walked upon the waters, he cried to his apostles,

"It is I; be not afraid," John vi. How much rather may he speak to us in this manner, now that he sits upon the throne that can never be moved! Christian souls, who trembles at the approaches of Death, imagine that the Lord Jesus, crowned with glory, calls to thee from heaven. Fear not; for I call thee, and hold out unto thee mine arms, I that am thy Saviour and Redeemer, who have satisfied for all thy sins with my blood, and who have redeemed thee from the curse of the law, and eternal damnation. I have disarmed God's justice, vanquished hell, broken the serpent's head, and swallowed up Death in victory. I have purchased for thee the glories of heaven, and the delights of paradise; I have trampled upon the world and all its powers. I am worshipped by all the church triumphing in heaven, and by legions of angels that fly about my throne. I will therefore send some of them to guard thee, and when thou shalt leave the body, where thou livest as a stranger, they shall bring up thy soul into this magnificent abode of immortality, whither I am come to prepare a place for thee.

Without doubt, if the anchor of our hope is fixed within the veil, that is, in heaven, where Jesus Christ is gone in as our forerunner, we shall not apprehend the most contrary and boisterous storms raised against us by the Prince of the powers of the air, who works with efficacy in the children of rebellion. We shall tread under foot all the billows of this troublesome sea, and through these swelling waves we shall march safe to our divine Jesus. If at any time we begin to sink, and that our soul is frightened, this almighty Lord, who hath not only delivered himself, but is the Saviour and Deliverer of his church, will speak to us as the apostle, "O man of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" Knowest thou not, that I command the winds, that I can still the waves, and drive away the tempest? Knowest thou not that I have in my hands the keys of hell and of death? When a person is to go to a
place

place of rest and happiness, that he cannot pass to it but through a painful and thorny passage, he marches with resolution and courage, when a friend of his is gone before, and stretches out to him his hand to help him. Now it is not possible to attain to the glories of heaven, and the joys of paradise, but through the passage of death ; a passage very uneasy and grievous to our present seeming ; but Jesus Christ, who loves us with an eternal love, hath gone through this passage before us. He is passed from this world to the Father ; he is gone to his God and to our God. And that we might go to him, he hath sent the light of his holy word to direct us, John ii. He vouchsafes to us his staff and his rod to comfort us, Psal. xxxiii. and stretcheth out the right hand of his almighty power to cause us to pass from death to life ; “ Where I am (saith he) there shall also my servants be,” John xii.

When the apostles went up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them, Mark ix. they were terrified and frightened ; but we that go up to the heavenly Jerusalem, and tread upon the footsteps of this mighty Saviour, ought to be full of boldness and christian confidence.

This great God and Saviour reigns in heaven ; he commands the earth, the sea, and the deep ; therefore we may die without fear, and with an holy joy. For who would not rejoice to enter into the glorious palace of immortality, where we shall see not only the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, the holy and blessed Virgin, with all the saints of paradise ; but we shall see, face to face, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom so many kings and prophets have desired to see and hear ? While we remain in those bodies, we are absent from this victorious Lord, therefore rather desire to be absent from the body and to be with Christ. This consolation causeth the holy apostle to confess, “ That his desire was to depart, and to be with Christ, which was far better for him,” Phil. i. 23. The

The queen of Sheba left her kingdom, and came from a corner of the earth, to see king Solomon, who was but a type of Christ, and who had but a little of his wisdom and glory. And is there any treasure on earth, and honour in this age, or pleasure in this life, that might hinder us from going to see our Saviour Jesus Christ? When he was in his infancy, the shepherds left their flocks, and made haste towards Bethlehem to look upon him; the wise men came from the east to adore him; and if he were yet on earth, we should undertake a tedious pilgrimage to the ends of the world, and part with our dearest enjoyments to see him. But the little village of Bethlehem is nothing in comparison of the celestial Jerusalem; and what is the sight of the Lord Jesus in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger, and in the arms of his blessed mother, in comparison of the sight of a Christ clothed with light, crowned with glory, and sitting on the right hand of God the Father, upon a magnificent throne, worshipped by all the angels, and the glorified spirits? The father of the faithful was transported with joy, when he saw in spirit the day of the Lord; and the spouse in the *Canticles* was exceeding glad, when she heard him knocking at her door; and old Simeon was ravished above measure, when he beheld Christ in his arms. How much more shall we be transported and ravished into admiration and joy, when we shall look upon him as he is now in his highest glory, and raised to the most magnificent state, and when we shall enjoy him, never to leave him again! When St. Stephen beheld the heavens open, and Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father, his face became radiant as that of an angel. Therefore how luminous and shining shall our countenances be, when we shall enter into these places of light, and behold face to face this blessed Redeemer for ever!

When old Jacob heard that Joseph was alive, and reigning in Egypt, whom he had so tenderly loved, and for whom he had

had shed so many tears, he was passionately desirous to see again this dear son, and to be witness of his glory: "It is enough (saith he) Joseph is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die," Gen. xlv. And what think you, believing souls, when you understand that your true Joseph, whom you heartily love, lives and reigns above in heaven, and that he is there worshipped by all the glorified spirits? Do not you earnestly desire to see his face, and to behold his divine glory and happiness? This old father was weak and feeble through age, and oppressed with grief; but his spirit revived when he saw the waggons that Joseph had sent to fetch him. And you, my christian brethren, when old age and sickness have weakened your bodies, and grief and displeasure have undermined your hearts, do not you feel yourselves revive when Death draws near, and you perceive, with the eyes of faith, the horses and chariots which Christ hath sent to carry you away to the paradise of his glory? Joseph received his father and brethren with tears of joy, and all the house of Pharaoh rang with outward expressions of gladness. With what joy, with what kindness and love, will Christ embrace us! What rejoicing will there be in heaven at your arrival! It is not to be expressed, but with tongues of angels. Joseph fed his father and his brethren; but he never yielded up to them any part of his glory. Whereas our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, who excels Joseph as much in power and magnificence, as he does in love and mercy, shall not only feed us with the bread of his kingdom, and give us to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, but he will also impart unto us some of his glory and splendour, as he promised to his apostles, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me," Luke xxii. "To him that overcometh, I will grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. iii. Joseph's brethren, notwithstanding

standing his dignity and power, became slaves ; but Jesus Christ will place upon our head a crown of pure gold. Joseph could not defend his brethren from death ; all died one after another, and he also in his time yielded up the ghost. But Jesus Christ, who is risen from the dead, dieth no more ; Death hath no more dominion over him ; so that he lives for ever and ever, and will cause us all to become immortal. Therefore, instead of desiring, as Jacob, to live to go down into Egypt to see his son Joseph, we should earnestly desire to die, that we might ascend up into heaven, there to behold our Lord Jesus Christ, our Father and Redeemer. When Jacob embraced again this wonderful and beloved child, in the exceeding transport of his joy and love he burst out into this kind of language, " Let me die, now that I have seen again thy face, and that thou art alive." On the contrary, when we shall embrace Christ in his glory, when we shall behold his divine countenance, we shall speak in another manner. My Lord and my God, since I now see thee alive, and reigning in heaven, I shall live also, and reign with thee for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a believing Soul, which arms itself against the Fears of Death, by meditating on the glorious Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven, and his sitting at the right hand of God.

O HOLY and divine Saviour, I have often looked upon thy generous behaviour, and glorious victories, to strengthen myself against all apprehensions of death ; but, if thou wilt render my joy most perfect and accomplished, grant me grace to meditate upon thy divine triumph. As thou hast been engaged in many encounters for my sake, and hast vouchsafed to give me a share in thy victory, grant me also a share in thy glorious ascension and triumph. As thou hast suffered for
my

my sins, and art risen again for my justification ; thou art also ascended up into heaven to prepare a place for me. Thou art willing that I should be admitted into thy noble and divine palace ; that I should be where thou art, that I may behold thy glory, which thou hast enjoyed with God the Father, before the creation of the world. O sweet and merciful Lord, what cause have I to fear to go to heaven, since thou art there seated in the highest glory and felicity, and stretchest out thy merciful hand to receive me ? Have I not good reason to expect to be glorified in thy kingdom, since thou thyself dost bestow upon those that serve thee, immortal crowns and sceptres ? O great God and Saviour, thy throne is surrounded with glory and splendour ; nevertheless, I will draw near unto it with boldness ; for it is a throne of love, and a throne of mercy, unto which every penitent sinner may come. Round about this glorious throne I see a rainbow of emerald-colour, that certifies me that thy covenant is everlasting. When thy glory and majesty increased, thy love for me was not diminished, and thy compassion and goodness were always alike. Thou art the same yesterday and to-day, and thou shalt always be the same for ever. Thou hast been pleased, for my salvation, to lie in a manger, and to be nailed to a cross. Thou hast given thy soul for my ransom ; and hast spilt thy precious blood to wash and cleanse me from my sins, and to mark me a way that I might enter into thy holy sanctuary. In the midst of all that glory and light with which thou art now clothed, thou hast not thought it a scorn to acknowledge me for thy brother, and for a member of thy mystical body. It is for my sake that thou appearest before thine heavenly Father ; and it is for me that thou offerest up unto him prayers and supplications. O wonderful Lord, it is in thy power to give me the things which thou hast merited by thy sufferings, and which thou desirest for me by thy prayers and intercession ; for all power is given unto thee in heaven and in earth. O sovereign Monarch of the whole world, hast thou not made

us this great and gracious promise, "When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men after me?" And is it not for us that thou hast prayed in this excellent manner, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me?" Since therefore thou hast left this wretched earth, to go and reign above in heaven, take unto thee my soul, O wonderful Redeemer, and deliver it from this valley of tears and misery. Cause it to understand at the time of its departure these words of joy and eternal comfort, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Lord Jesus, draw me with the cords of thy mercy and grace, and I shall run after thee. And in regard I must of necessity pass through death to come to thee, the Prince of life and immortality, give me grace to consider of it in the same manner as the prophet Elias did the fiery chariot that lifted him up to heaven; or as Jacob did the waggon that carried him into Egypt, to his son that reigned there. This holy father in a transport of joy cried out, "Let me see my son Joseph again, and then let me die." But when I shall be ravished with an unspeakable and glorious joy, I shall speak in another manner: Let me die, that I may behold my true Joseph, the soul of my soul, the light of life, the Author of my glory and happiness. O sweet Jesus, I shall freely and willingly leave this wretched and infirm dwelling, to enter into thy heavenly palace, to behold thy glory and magnificence. O King of kings, and Lord of lords, when shall I hear that divine wisdom that drops from thy lips? When shall I see thee seated upon the throne of thy glorious Majesty, where thousand thousands wait upon thee, and ten millions worship thee? When shall I enter into the glorious company of saints, and blessed spirits, that sing forth thy praises, and cast at thy feet their precious crowns? O victorious Monarch, who art now in thy kingdom enjoying a perfect happiness, forget not thy poor servant; be not un-

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mindful

mindful of thy son (or daughter) who am now overwhelmed with the sorrows of this miserable life, and the anguish of death. Let not the songs of the holy angels, and the applauses of all the glorified spirits, hinder thee from listening to my sighs and groans. O almighty and merciful Lord, look upon me with the eyes of thy love, and reach unto me thine helping hand. Send to me thine angels of light to receive my soul, and protect me from the angels of darkness, that endeavour to destroy me, and to drag me headlong into hell. Let some of these glorious spirits that wait for thine orders, and fly at thy command, deliver me from death, and carry me upon their wings into thy bosom. I see the heavens open, and Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of God the Father. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. *Amen.*

CHAP. XIX.

The seventh Consolation against the Fears of Death is, our strict and inseparable Union with Jesus Christ, by the Means of his holy Spirit, and the First-fruits of our blessed Immortality.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ is not only alive, and triumphs in heaven, but it is from thence our life, our glory, and our blessed immortality, proceed. For, as the Father hath life in himself, he hath also given to the Son to have life in himself; and as the Father raiseth and quickeneth the dead, likewise the Son quickeneth whomsoever he will: so that we may not only say to him, as St. Peter, "Thou hast the words of eternal life," John ix. but we may justly speak to him in David's language, "With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light," Psa. xxxvi. Therefore all those that are united and incorporated into the Prince of life, participate of the fulness of his holy Spirit, and by that means they become partakers of immortality and happiness. Now, by

the virtue of Christ's death and passion, we are not only made partakers of the fruits of his sufferings, but we are united to and incorporated in him ; so that by that means we have obtained not only the great and precious promises of glory and immortality, which he hath purchased for us by the infinite merits of his sufferings ; but we receive the first-fruits and foretastes of our future blessedness.

He that is lifted up, and dwells on high, quickens the spirits of the humble, Isa. lvii. He dwells in our hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 1. He pours into our souls his holy and quickening Spirit. For, because we are the children of God, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to cry, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. Whosoever hath not this Spirit of the Lord Jesus, he is none of his. By the means of this Spirit he dwells in us, and we in him ; we become members of his body ; and we may boast, that we are his flesh and his bones.

All things that are most strictly united by nature or art, are employed to represent this admirable union, John vi. which we enjoy with Jesus Christ, by the means of his Spirit that quickens us, Rom. xiii. From hence are derived these expressions of the holy apostle, "We have put on the Lord Jesus Christ," Gal. iii. And that "when we draw near to him who is the living stone, rejected of men, but lifted up, and of great price with God," 1 Pet. ii. "we, like so many living stones, are built up together to make a spiritual house." For the same reason our Saviour informs us, John xv. "That he is the tree, and that we are the branches." And St. Paul assures us, that if we are become one plant with him by the conformity of his death, we shall also be one by the resemblance of his resurrection, Rom. vi.

To express to us that this sacred union contains many ties of love, our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as our Brother,

ther, our Father, and our Bridegroom. Therefore the apostle tells us, that he thinks it no disgrace to own us for his brethren, in saying, Heb. i. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren;" and also where he informs us, Rom. iii. that "God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." And after his resurrection, he speaks thus to Mary Magdalen, John xx. "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and to your God." Therefore this glorious Redeemer, shewing himself unto God, Heb. ii. with all the elect, saith, "Here I am, and the children which thou hast given me." And by the mouth of Hosea, Hos. ii. he speaks to his church, and makes this promise to her, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies." From hence it is that this church is called, "the spouse of the Lamb," in the Revelation; and, in the Canticles, the spiritual union between Christ and his church is expressed by a continual allusion to a marriage between a man and his wife.

And because our meat and drink are returned into our body and substance, Jesus Christ assures us, "That his flesh is truly meat, and his blood is truly drink; that he is the true bread come down from heaven, that gives life to the world, and whosoever shall eat him shall live for ever."

But, among all the similitudes borrowed to represent our union with Jesus Christ by his holy Spirit, there is none employed more frequently in holy scripture than that of the human body; for there is not any more proper for us. All the spirits that give life and motion proceed from the head; and as soon as the members are separated from it, they die. In like

like manner, the Spirit that quickens us, and makes us become new creatures, proceeds from Jesus Christ ; so that whosoever is separated from his Head, he falls into death and eternal destruction. And, as there are many members, nevertheless they make up but one body, because they are all animated with the same Spirit, and they are kept alive by the same Head. So there be many members belonging to Christ's mystical body, some in combats yet upon earth, and others glorified in heaven ; nevertheless they make up but one only mystical and spiritual body ; for they are quickened by the same Spirit, and receive all the celestial influences from the same Head. St. Paul teacheth us this doctrine, in express terms, 1 Cor. xii. "For as the body is one, and hath many members ; and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body ; so also is Christ ; for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Finally, because the same Spirit that is in our Lord, as in the Head and Fountain, and in the church in general, (as in the body, which is quickened and moved,) is also in every particular member ; the holy apostle is not satisfied to call this spiritual body of Christ, and his church, Christ ; but he tells us moreover, that whosoever "is united unto him, is made but one spirit with him."

These and such like representations, let them be never so lively and noble, are but dark shadows, and imperfect images of our union with Jesus Christ by his holy Spirit ; for the richest and most magnificent garment can never keep off from the body diseases, nor hinder the approaches of corruption that creeps upon it. There is no foundation ever so firm and well settled, that can free the house built upon it from the ruins and breaches of time and weather. Although the sap mounts up from the root of the vine, and runs into the twigs and branches, they wither at last, and are cast into the fire.

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The rarest meats, and the most delicious drinks, can never make our bodies become immortal; Death snatcheth away the brother from the brother, the father from the child, and the wife from her husband. The stroke of the sword can separate a body from the healthiest and strongest head; nay, without any such violence, the head dies as well as the body; and the spirits that run in our veins are far from hindering the corruption of our bodies, for they corrupt of themselves, and vanish away. In short, the strictest unions of nature and art are dissolved by time, so that all things under the sun are subject to vanity and inconstancy. But the Spirit of our Lord Jesus is the principle of an eternal life, and the seed of an incorruptible glory. Whosoever is united to him by this Spirit, nothing can separate him from Christ, neither life, nor death, nor hell, nor the world, nor things present, nor things to come. Therefore our blessed Saviour could find nothing here upon earth, nor amongst all the creatures, worthy and able to represent this perfect and inseparable union. He seeks an image of it beyond all natural beings in the holy Trinity; that unchangeable union, which was, which is, and which shall ever be, between him and God the Father. As we may see in his excellent prayer, "Father, I pray for them all which shall believe in me, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that they may be one, even as we are one," John xvii. Banish, therefore, all fear, believing souls; for all the three Persons of the most holy, most glorious, and most wonderful Trinity, are engaged for your salvation, to bring you to your eternal happiness. The Father, by his infinite wisdom, hath found out a means to reconcile us to himself, to satisfy his offended justice, and to declare the riches of his unparalleled mercies. The Son hath purchased for us this great salvation, by offering the shameful death of the cross, and by spilling his most precious blood for the forgiveness of our sins. And the Holy Spirit, by incorporating us into Jesus Christ, makes us partakers of the
infinite

infinite merits of his sufferings, Rev. iii. That is the true hyssop that sprinkles the divine blood of the Lamb, without spot or blemish, to cleanse our souls, Heb. xii. It is he that gives us the white stone, where the new name of Elect and Believer is written, Rev. ii. which none knows but he that hath it. He gives to eat of the hidden manna, and of the food of angels, John iv. which the world knoweth not. It is instead of a precious ring or jewel, by which our spiritual Bridegroom promises and confirms to us his conjugal faith. It is the seal of the living God, that seals to us the covenant of grace and the promises of glory and happiness made to us in the gospel, as the apostle himself tells us, Eph. i. that now having believed the gospel of our salvation, "we have been sealed by the Spirit of promise." Therefore he exhorts us, Eph. iv. not to grieve the holy Spirit of God, by whom we have been sealed for the day of redemption." Finally, this is the Spirit that witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the children of God. "If we be children, we are heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. viii.

Think not, Christian souls, that I design to persuade you, that this holy Spirit of our Lord Jesus shall come and whisper in your ears, or call unto you from within, that you are the children of God, as the extravagant Quakers amongst us imagine. The testimony that he gives to our spirits is a real and effectual testimony, if I may so speak; for he regenerates us, and makes us become new creatures; he gives a more certain assurance of his adoption, than if he did declare from heaven, "Thou art my child, and thy name is written in the book of life." As the seal imprints its image in the wax, thus the Spirit of the Lord Jesus imprints in our souls the image of holiness and divine virtue. Now as the figure that remains upon the wax, makes us judge, without dispute, what manner of seal made the impression; likewise, when you find God's image printed in your hearts, acknowledge the

the finger of God, and the virtue of his holy Spirit, who have been there : for none can have the blessed image, but he must needs be the child of God. The Holy Spirit, that gives it to our souls, kindles in us the blessed flames of holy love, and produceth in us tongues of fire ; he makes us speak to God with boldness, as to our Father, and lift up our eyes to heaven with joy and gladness, as to the place of our inheritance. All the goodness of this present life may be, nay, will be, lost at last, Prov. xxiii. Riches take wings, and fly away, like an eagle ; honour vanisheth away, as smoke carried away with the wind ; earthly delights and pleasures haste away as a torrent, or as the waters of a river that slide along the banks, and they end at last in the sea of bitterness and sorrow. If by chance these vanities continue with the worldlings while they remain on earth, Psal. xlix. they can continue no longer ; for they are stript of them at the grave. Their riches and their honours are buried with them ; and all their unsettled delights fly away with their breath. But Death hath no power over this Spirit of life, which is our true treasure and glory, and everlasting delight.

Again, The true and lively faith, that embraceth Jesus Christ our Saviour, shall cease ; and hope, that considers the advantages to come, shall one day be abolished. While we are in this earthly pilgrimage, we walk by faith, and not by sight ; and while we are tossed up and down upon this dangerous sea of the world, Heb. vi. we have need of the anchor of our hope, and to expect with patience the fulfilling of that we hope for, Rom. vii. But when we shall come to our heavenly country, we shall have no need of a staff to walk with, nor of a shield to defend us, and to quench the fiery darts of the devil. When we shall be secure in the haven of eternity, we shall have no occasion to make use of this anchor ; for our hope shall be changed into a perfect fruition. When we shall be in paradise, we shall need no
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wings to carry us up to God, but only to fly about his throne, as the seraphims. In short, we shall need no looking-glass to see the glory of God ; for we shall behold him face to face. All that we believe at present without seeing, we shall then see, and believe no more. But the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, whom the world knoweth not, and cannot receive, is not given to us for a time, but to dwell in us for ever. As the humanity, which our Lord took from us, was never cast off, nor ever shall be; thus, the Spirit which he hath given us, shall never be taken from us. The humanity which our Saviour united in the person of the divine Word, hath been glorified by this eternal union ; but the Spirit which he hath united to our spirits, by this gracious union, is the foundation of glory, and of our eternal happiness.

This Spirit of life is not only the seal of the promises of God, but also the earnest of our incorruptible inheritance, reserved for us in heaven. This is St. Paul's doctrine, Eph. i. for when he had said, "You have been sealed by the holy Spirit of promise," he adds, "which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Because this divine Spirit is the seal of the living God, it is the earnest of our inheritance ; for this heavenly image that it imprints in our souls, shall be part of that glory with which he will crown us in his holy paradise. Therefore the Wisdom that is veracity in every respect, doth not call this Spirit a pledge or gage, but an earnest. For tho' both be given as a confirmation of promises, and an assurance of their accomplishment ; there is this difference, that men commonly take back again the thing engaged, when that which is promised is done ; but the earnest remains always, and is part of the sum to be paid. As therefore the earnest which is given, is never taken away, but men commonly add to it the remaining sum promised ; likewise our Saviour never takes away from his elect the Spirit of adoption, which
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hath been once bestowed upon them ; but he increaseth its graces and advantages, until he hath raised them to the highest glory, and most divine happiness, which he hath promised.

It is in this case, as with the sun, which, as soon as it appears upon our horizon, increaseth the light more and more, until it ascends up to our meridian ; or, as the streams and rivers, which the farther they run, the more they increase, until they come to the sea : Therefore, when our Lord and Saviour speaks of this Spirit of grace, which such as believe in him receive, he tells the Jews, John vii. "He that believeth in me, rivers of living water shall flow from his belly." And to the Samaritan woman he speaks in this language, John iv. "He that shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water, that I shall give him, shall become to him a fountain of water, springing up to eternal life. This was sometime shewn in a vision to the prophet Ezekiel, Ezek. xlvii. by the waters that ran down from the sanctuary ; for, at the first, they reached no higher than the prophet's ankle-bones ; afterwards they rose up to his knee, and then to his middle ; at last they increased in such a manner, that they became a great torrent, and a deep river, which was not to be forded over, and which discharged itself into the sea.

As David, in the beginning of his reign, commanded but one tribe, but afterwards he enlarged the limits of his kingdom over all the tribes of Israel, that small portion of the kingdom was not then taken from him, but only increased and became greater : Thus it is with us during this life ; we have a small part of the kingdom of heaven intrusted in our hands ; or, if I may say so, we have now some jewels of the incorruptible crown, which is promised hereafter. This part shall not be taken from us, this bright beam of our future glory shall never be put out in the life to come. We shall possess as much of this kingdom as we are able, and shall

be clothed with all the light and splendour of the heavenly glory.

But as there is no comparison ever so just, but is wanting in some respects, there is no small difference in this; for the tribe of Judah was the noblest and richest part of the kingdom of Israel; but that part which our souls enjoy at present, of the happiness and glory of the kingdom of heaven, is but as a drop of water, in comparison of the ocean; or as a weak ray of light, in comparison of the sun, 2 Cor. xii. Therefore the apostle St. Paul, who had been ravished into the third heaven; and who knew better than any man in the world, what were the joys and glories of heaven, when he mentions this Spirit of adoption that God sends into our hearts, he calls it, Rom. vii. "the first-fruits of his Spirit." To teach us, that there is as vast a difference between the measure of the gifts and graces which we receive here below, and the overflowing abundance which we shall enjoy in heaven, as between some few ears of corn, and the whole harvest of a field. It is like a small quantity of fruits which were brought to the children of Israel in the wilderness, compared to the great abundance of all the land of Canaan. It is like some small crumbs of the heavenly bread, of which we shall have our fill in the kingdom of God; or as some small drops of that new wine which we shall drink for ever in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Therefore, believing souls, you may from hence conclude, that the approaches of Death ought not to scare nor fright you; because that you have within you the principles of a life everlasting, and the seeds of a glorious immortality, which cannot be taken from you. Jesus Christ does not only wait for you, and stretch out unto you his arms to receive you into his rest; but he himself is also with you; and will render the passage more easy and pleasant to this new world, where justice and righteousness dwell. He will work miracles for

your sake, John xi. and if you believe, you shall see the glory of God, Exod. xix. We do not only follow the footsteps of this divine and true Joshua, but we pass over with him, and he passeth over with us, Joshua iii. We are not like the children of Israel, that went through the river Jordan, whilst the priests held the ark in the middle of the river; but we may be compared to the priests themselves, 1 Pet. ii. that did bear the ark of the covenant, and caused the waters to return back to the spring again. For we are a generation of priests, and we bear in our souls the Lord Jesus, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In short, our souls return to God, the fountain from whence they came. Let therefore that heavenly voice, which was heard in the *Holy Land*, sound in our ears, Isa. xliii. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." And say with David, "When I shall walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I shall fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy staff and thy rod shall comfort me," Psl. xxiii.

It seems the primitive Christians had a design to shew us this truth by the picture of a giant-like man, wading through the sea with a staff in his hand, and a child upon his shoulder. For this giant is the emblem of a Christian, who lifts up his mind as high as heaven: the sea signifies the dangers of this world, and the fears of death: the staff represents faith, that keeps us up in our passage through life and death, upon which when we lean we worship the living God of heaven and earth: and the child is an image of Christ; therefore he that bears him is called Christophorus, that is, *He that bears Christ*. Cæsar could not endure to see his pilot tremble in a
furious

furious storm at sea, because he was in his boat. We have far less reason to be afraid, since we carry in our hearts the great Emperor and Monarch of the world, the hope and comfort of Israel. Cæsar was as much in danger as his pilot, to make shipwreck ; but the Lord Jesus Christ hath all the winds at his command : he can still the most disturbed sea, and through the most terrible death he can cause us to pass, and arrive at the safe haven of eternal rest, and of a most happy and glorious life.

When David shewed himself with a purpose to fight with Goliath, he spoke to this dreadful Philistine in this manner : "I come unto thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." But you, Christian souls, when you are to encounter with Death, you may say to it, not only, I come to thee in the name of Him who commands legions of angels, and all the armies of immortal spirits ; but, I come to thee clothed with his armour, strengthened by his holy Spirit, and assisted by him in person. For Jesus Christ, who has overcome Death for us, intends to overcome Death by us. We are the living stones which he hath chosen, of his wonderful grace and mercy, to bring down that proud insulting enemy, which causeth all worldlings to tremble, and cover their faces with shame and confusion.

We have seen a Samson breaking in pieces, with an admirable strength, the cords with which he had been bound by the Philistines, Judg. xvi. and tearing also the body of a young lion, in which he found, a few days after, honey most pleasant to his taste. It will be much easier for us, when we shall be strengthened with the divine virtue of the Lord Jesus, of whom Samson was but a type, to tear in pieces all the cords and chains of death. We shall rend in pieces the body of this old lion ; and when we shall search into his bowels with a serious and repeated meditation, we shall find the sweetest and most ravishing comforts.

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As when the prophet Elias was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot, he let fall his cloak, with which Elisha separated the waters of Jordan, so that he passed through the river on foot ; likewise our Saviour Jesus Christ, being ascended up above the clouds to the throne of his glory, hath left to us the cloak of his righteousness ; he hath granted us his holy Spirit, that we might pass through the turbulent waves of the tempestuous sea of this world, by its divine virtue, and that through death we might enter into immortal life.

And as the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, separated his soul from his body, although his innocent soul and holy body remained always united personally to his divinity ; in the same manner, the believer's death disunites for a time his soul from his body, but it can never separate it from the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, that is the Soul of our souls, and such an holy flame that it can never be extinguished.

When the high-priest of the Jews put off his priestly ornaments, he cast off at the same time his breastplate, where the names of the twelve tribes were engraven, *Exod. xx.* Not only our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, not only our pictures are printed upon the palms of his hands with the blood of the covenant ; but we are as a signet upon his heart, *Cant. viii.* so that we cannot be separated from him any more than his heart can be taken from him. His love is stronger than death, and his embraces are embraces of love.

Ruth promised to Naomi, that death alone should be able to separate them, *Ruth i.* But on the contrary, we may tell our Lord and Saviour, who is our father, brother, and husband ; Not only death shall never be able to separate us, but it rather shall bring us nearer to thee, and cause us to rest in thy bosom, where we shall be for ever satisfied with thine heavenly delights. Christians, you need not fear Death ; for you
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are not to be wounded by all its darts; for you have been dipped in the river that springs to eternal life. The Spirit of the Lord Jesus that is in you, is the spirit of life, the beginning of immortality, and the only spring of eternal glory and happiness. Since the breath of the prophet Elias raised a dead body to life, the spirit and breath of the Father and the Son will be able to keep your spiritual life from decaying, unless it be in Death's power to stop the breath of the Almighty; unless it be able to limit the beams of light and glory that come from his divine countenance; unless it can cause the rivers of living water that spring out of his throne, to cease and dry up; it is not possible, that it should cause us to perish, and render us miserable. Therefore you are certain of your eternal happiness, while Jesus shall be the author and well-spring of light, life, glory, and immortality; and that his holy Spirit shall be victorious over Death and hell; and you may sing with David, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord," Psl. cxviii.

You are not only sure of this glory and eternal happiness, and you are not only entered into possession of it by your faith and hope, but you begin already to enjoy it, and its first-fruits. For he that believes in Jesus Christ is passed from death to life, and whosoever hath the Son of God hath eternal life. As the prophet Moses, when he was in the wilderness, saw not only afar off the *Land of Promise*, but he tasted its delicious fruits: thus we do not only behold afar off with the eye of faith our celestial inheritance, but we taste at present, and relish some of its blessed delights. And as the fruits brought by the spies were the same, and like to them that the children of Israel fed upon in the *Promised Land*; in like manner, the fruits that we relish in the wilderness of this world are fruits of the tree of life, with which we shall be fully satisfied in heaven. For the grace that God bestows upon us here below, by his divine Spirit, is the beginning of
glory,

glory, with which he shall crown us above. The same Light that shines upon our souls on earth, shall shine brighter for ever in heaven. But whereas we look upon it, at present, as it were through a black mist, with much imperfection; then we shall see it clearly without veil or darkness. The same holiness that adorns at present our souls, shall be their ornament and glory; then it shall appear without spot or blemish. That same peace of conscience that preserves our hearts and senses, shall be without the least disturbance. In short, the same Jesus that is conceived in our hearts, and that is formed and grown in us by degrees, shall then appear in a perfect stature that shall want no more increase.

As it is with the sea, it enters into the rivers before the rivers can run to the sea; in like manner, God comes to us before we go to him; and heaven enters into our souls before we can enter into heaven.

Aged Simeon waited patiently for Death; but as soon as he had seen the Saviour of the world, and embraced him, he ran to meet Death. He thought upon nothing but his latter end; therefore he prayed to God most earnestly to receive him into his glorious rest. O Christian soul, how shouldest thou dispose and prepare thyself to die, since thou beholdest with the eyes of faith this blessed Redeemer, not wrapped up in swaddling clothes, but crowned with an infinite glory and light! He is not in thine arms, but he lodges in thine heart; thou hast not received him, to return or part with him again, but to be united to him for ever, and to be incorporated into his mystical body. Since therefore Death brings thee the nearer to thy Redeemer, perfects this blessed union, and casts thee into the very fountain of life; instead of being frightened at it, and grieved when it comes to thee, thou shouldest then rejoice, and be transported above measure with gladness. We should meet this Death with a cheerful countenance: I

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mean, that we should meet the Lord Jesus, this merciful Prince of life, who, having vouchsafed to thee the sight of his salvation, intends to receive thee into his rest and glorious peace, who reigns above in heaven.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a Christian Soul which arms itself against the Fears of Death, by meditating on our strict and inseparable Union with Jesus Christ, by his Holy Spirit, and the first-fruits in us of our blessed Immortality.

O MIGHTY and Merciful Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, and Fountain of living water, drive away from me the dark shadow of Death, and quench all the fires that it kindles in my soul. Thou hast not only died for me, but thou art pleased to live in me, that I might one day live for ever with thee. Thou hast, of thy pure mercy, chosen me for thy child, and hast made me a member of thy mystical body, flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone, and caused me to be a partaker of thy holy Spirit. God has given thee the Spirit without measure, that of thy fulness we might receive grace for grace. By the means of this blessed and infinite Spirit that abides in my soul, I am united to thee in a more perfect manner than the tree is to the root that bears it, or the child to its mother that nourisheth it in her womb, or the members of the human body to the head that gives them life. Ties that unite me unto thee, O glorious Saviour, are more unchangeable than the heavens and the earth. As nothing can pluck me out from thine hand, there is nothing can separate me from thine heart. Whether I live or die, I am thine, my Lord and my God, any nothing can alter thine affection for me. Death can take me out of the world, and carry me out of the embraces of my dearest friends; but it can never separate me from thine holy Spirit, the Soul of my soul, and

the Light of my life, which cannot be put out by all the envious blasts and storms of the prince of darkness ; but it will rather bring me nearer to behold thy face, to rest in thy bosom, and unite me to thee more perfectly for ever. To whom shall I go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and art the inexhaustible fountain. Thou art my hope and my treasure, my glory, and mine only happiness. O faithful and unquestionable Witness ! I should be worse than an infidel, if I questioned my future salvation and glory, since the Father hath not spared thee for me, though thou art his only beloved Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person ; since thou, O merciful Lord, hast willingly suffered the most shameful death of the cross, and spilt thy precious blood to wash away my sins, and satisfy for my crimes ; and since thine holy Spirit is come into mine heart, to make me a partaker of that precious blood, and seal me for the day of redemption. O glorious Spirit of my Saviour, that rests upon me ! when I shall be able to speak the language of angels, I shall not sufficiently express the wonderful operations that thou producest in my soul. Thou kindlest in me such heavenly flames as never go out, but are always alive, as the fire of thine altar. Thou formest in me a white stone, where a new name is written, which no man knows but he that receives it. Thou givest me to eat of that hidden manna, of that food of angels, that the world knoweth not. Thou witnessest with my spirit that I am a child and heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, the King of kings. Thou dost not only seal me the pardon of all my sins, but dost also purify my conscience from all dead works, to serve the living God. Thou causest me to cry out, *Abba, Father* ; and imprintest in my heart the glorious image of my heavenly Father. Thou art the seal of my adoption, the earnest of mine incorruptible inheritance, prepared for me in heaven. Thou hast given me the infallible assurances of a glorious and eternal life, and begun it already in my soul, granting me its first-fruits.

Thou causest me to behold the sun-shine of thy grace, and makest it to give light in mine understanding. Thou dost not only vouchsafe me the favour of beholding from this valley of tears thine heavenly Canaan, but causest me to taste of its fruits. I am not yet come to the fountains of waters that spring forth to eternal life ; but I taste the streams and rivers that flow in me. I am not yet in thine holy paradise, but thou hast caused paradise to be in me ; thou hast given to me an unspeakable and glorious joy, and hast bestowed upon me the grace of God that passeth all understanding. O living and quickening Spirit, unknown to the world ! thou strengthenest me in such a manner, that Death shall never be able to fright me. Thou hast united me to thyself by an inseparable union, O Prince of life ! and hast put me in a state of immortality, an infallible principle of glory, and a source of unspeakable happiness : Thou art in me to dwell with me for ever ; therefore thou shalt fill up the measure of thy most signal favours. My faith, by thy divine assistance, hath spied out the kingdom prepared for me from the beginning of the world ; and shortly I shall see with mine eyes the inexpressible beauty of that celestial country, that flows with the milk of the purest and sincerest joys, and with the honey of the sweetest and most ravishing comforts. Thou hast sent a foretaste of the fruits of the tree of life ; but I shall come into thine heavenly paradise ; I shall ever have my fill of those delicious fruits. Now, thou hast caused some drops of the dew of heaven to fall upon mine heart ; but then thou wilt make me drink of the rivers of thy divine pleasures. At present, in my painful passage, in the midst of my groans and tears, I may gather some ears ; but when I come to my heavenly country, I shall reap my hands full with songs of joy. Here upon earth I see God as in a glass, obscurely ; but in heaven I shall behold him face to face, and I shall be satisfied with his likeness. My Lord and my God, who by the infinite merits of thy sufferings
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hast purchased for us this Spirit of life, and who hast given to my soul such an authentic seal of my salvation; and such a precious earnest of thine eternal bliss; I feel in me the motions and endeavours of this new man, that strives to leave this body of darkness and death, to enter into the light of the living. Lord Jesus, since thou hast granted me the Spirit of thy grace, enlightened my soul with thy divine knowledge; and caused me to know the way of life; since thou hast given me to taste of the heavenly gift, of the powers of the life to come, and hast vouchsafed to me the first-fruits of thy glory, and that I already feel heaven in my soul; since I behold thee with the eyes of my faith, I embrace thee with all my affections, and that thou dwellest in my heart; perfect in me the work of thy grace, and bring me at last to thine eternal glory. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Amen.

CHAP. XX.

The eighth Consolation is, to consider that Death delivers us from all temporal Evils, that we daily suffer.

THERE are certain pictures with two faces; the one represents most ugly features, and the other beautiful and pleasant things. This is the true emblem of Death; for it may be painted with a fearful countenance, a lean body, and iron hands, that ravish us from our goods, and our honours; and that divide our persons, dragging our bodies into a loathsome sepulchre. If we look upon Death in this manner, we cannot but tremble and fear. We may also look upon it as a powerful deliverer, that unlooseth all our fetters, breaks our chains to pieces, and raises our souls to the highest glory and happiness. If we consider thus, there is nothing more lovely than Death, and nothing more to be desired.

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I have hitherto endeavoured to shew how a believer shall strengthen and comfort himself against the fears of Death; but now I shall add something more, with Heaven's assistance, I shall labour to prove, not only that Death is to be expected without apprehension, but to be received with an holy joy; that it is not at all dreadful, but rather is to be earnestly desired. I shall no longer give, to speak properly, any consolations against the fears of Death; for I hope to make it plain, that Death itself is to be looked upon as the greatest consolation and comfort.

That I may attain my purpose, I shall shew, as in a picture, a short view of all the dreadful miseries from which Death delivers us; and then I shall endeavour to paint out, in the brightest colours, or rather, I shall chalk out unto you, the blessedness and glories into which it ushers us.

Man's life and misery are twin sisters that are born at the same time, and own Adam for their first parent; they die together at the same instant in true believers. We all know that man begins his life weeping and crying, and ends with sighs and groans. We come into the world all covered with blood, and we go out covered all over with a cold sweat. If the child cries not so soon as it is born, we judge that it is dead; and when the sick body ceases to groan and sigh, we say that he is past hopes. So that our crying is a token of life, and the end of our sighs is likewise an infallible sign of our death. Wretched man! how miserable is thy condition! Thy best friends rejoice at thy crying, and they weep and lament when thou ceasest to sigh and groan.

All the rest of thy time between the cradle and the grave is no happier: It is but a continued chain of misery, a mixture of pains, a succession of evils, and a sea of bitterness. As one wave falls upon the back of another, one evil is no sooner gone,

gone, but another follows and threatens us. One depth calleth to another, and all manner of floods and storms pass over our heads. As the sparks rise out of the fire to fly up, man is born for misery and pain, Job v. and as the wisest of kings speaks, his days are nothing but pain, and his employment but trouble; in the night his heart resteth not, Eccles. iii. There are scarce any dwellings, but messengers of ill news arrive at them sometimes, as they did to that of Job, ch. ii.

By God's unchangeable order and appointment the days succeed the nights, and divide the year into two equal parts. For if the nights are longer in one season, so much the shorter they are in another. But the nights of our afflictions are so long, that they seem to last several ages; whereas the days of prosperity are so short, that they are gone in a moment. So that we may justly say with the prophet Moses, "The best of our days are but labour and sorrow; so soon doth our life pass away, and we are gone," Ps. xc. It is as easy a task to number the stars of the firmament, and to reckon up the grains of the sand upon the sea-shore, as to make an exact examination of all the evils that happen to us as men belonging to a civil society, or as members of God's church, and his adopted children. Therefore old Jacob had cause to complain, that the years of his life had been so short and evil; but ours are so evil, that they cannot be too short.

I should compose many volumes, if I should undertake to describe perfectly all the infirmities and diseases that undermine the body, all the cutting pains, and cruel tortures, that torment and rack us.

The most languishing sicknesses, and the most violent pains, that afflict and disturb this body, are nothing in comparison of the excessive sadness and mortal anguish, that seize upon our souls, and fill them full of gall and bitterness. I think there

there is no man upon earth that can boast of having passed but one day without some displeasure, either inward or outward. For we either feel present evils, that strike through our hearts as so many darts, or the remembrance of former griefs trouble us, or else the fears of future mischiefs vex and fret us. I may justly say, that the devil is not so cruel to himself, as we are to our own persons; for this evil spirit cares not to be tormented before the time; whereas we anticipate the evils by unquiet apprehensions, and wilful vexations entertained in our minds. The fear of misery makes us far more miserable; and the apprehension of an imaginary evil causeth us to feel a real affliction, and an unfeigned torment.

When we consider any man's life, we only look upon that which appears most delightful and pleasant. We consider the nobility of his blood, the variety of his pleasures, the greatness of his riches, the glory of his offices and victories, and the pomp of his triumphs. But scarce any man takes notice of his miseries and afflictions; or, if some be so observed, they are but such as are too obvious to every man's eye; as the public affronts and disgraces, the loss of a battle, the degradation from an office, banishments, imprisonments, and such like unhappy afflictions. But, besides these calamities, which are visible to all the world, and the common motives of the condoling lamentations of our friends, there are many secret evils, that be far more painful. Our nearest relations discover not always our most sensible wounds, to pour into them a healing balm; they see not our deepest sorrows, nor do they dream of applying to our souls the most proper comforts.

When you behold stage-players capering upon a theatre, speaking as big as kings and princes, you seldom think, that under their magnificent and glorious attire they hide many
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filthy rags, and perhaps some incommodious vermin, that sting them to the quick. Thus when you cast your eyes upon riches, glory, pomp, and the magnificence of worldly men, you do not discover and see the canker-worm that gnaws their hearts, and the secret fire that devours their souls. Some there be, that laugh in public before company, and appear with a merry countenance, who are full of despair, and in private tear off their hair, sigh, and pour forth abundance of tears. Some feed themselves before the world with the most delicious meats, and drink the rarest wines; but inwardly they are glutted with poison and gall. This was the consideration of the wisest of kings, when he writ this sentence, "I have said of laughter, it is mad; and of gladness, what profiteth it?" Eccles. ii. 2.

As poverty and a mean estate are never without a train of fretful sorrows and cares; likewise riches and honours are never without fears and disturbances. And as there is no flame ever so pure, but sends up a smoke, nor a rose so beautiful, but has its prickles; so there is no condition so splendid or glorious, nor any prosperity so flourishing, but hath its troubles and sharp thorns. Every man upon earth, without exception, bears his cross, or hath a grievous thorn in his side. The moth sticks to the richest stuffs; the worm gets into the heart of the fairest flowers and fruits; and the thunderbolt strikes down the loftiest oaks, the highest steeples, and the most magnificent palaces: Likewise care and grief commonly eat up the flower of the greatest prosperities; and the noblest dignities are often subject to the strangest alterations, and to the most terrible downfalls. The richest crowns cast all their splendour and glory outwardly, but inwardly they are felt to be weighty upon the heads of such as bear them. A great Prince found his diadem so burdensome and unsufferable, that he cried out, "O crown! if thy weight were well known, none would lift thee up from the ground." It

marble and steel, unless thou hast renounced all natural affections, thou must needs be moved with these evils and disgraces that happen to them in their life ; and when Death snatcheth them away, it must needs tear thy very heart, and rend thy bowels.

But if it should happen, (which is impossible) that nothing hath ever afflicted thee in thine own person, or in that of any of thy friends, and if all such as are related to thee live in perfect and flourishing prosperity, like to those countries of the other world, that are always covered with flowers and fruits ; cast thine eyes upon the earth, and thou shalt there behold so many evils and calamities, that if thou hast any sense of humanity, thou shalt have cause to weep. God commanded the prophet Jeremiah to deliver the cup of his wrath to several people, one after another ; but now it seems, that he delivers this cup to them all at once. For, where is that people or nation, that may boast of never having drunk of it, and of not being in danger of drinking ? Some have drank it up to the very dregs, others drink it by degrees, others have this bitter cup brought to their lips.

Our Saviour caused his beloved disciple to see two angels, who had each of them in his hand a sharp sickle to reap the corn, and gather the grapes, Rev. xiv. Afterwards he discovered to him seven more, who had in their hands golden phials full of the wrath of God, which they poured upon the inhabitants of the world, to plague and punish them, Rev. xv. But at present, the holy angels appear in troops and legions, to cut off all mankind, and transport them in the wine-press of God's eternal vengeance. The wrath of God seems no more to be measured out by phials, nor by cups ; but it overflows as a great river, and a bottomless sea, that swells and runs over the banks and the shore. In short, the deluge of evils

evils that cover the face of the earth is so universal, that the doves, I mean the innocent and meek souls, that love peace and rest, can find no place to fix and settle their feet.

If thou hast any christian zeal and charity to increase thy sense of humility, thou canst not possibly behold with unconcerned affections the despicable and dangerous state of Christ's church on earth. For it is like Noah's ark in the midst of the roaring waves, like the burning bush of Mount Horeb surrounded with flames, like the prophet Daniel in the lion's den, and like his companions in the fiery furnace; so that it may justly speak in the same manner as the ancient Jerusalem, "Is it nothing to all you that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger," Lam. i. O blessed church of God, thou hast felt persecution from thine infancy till now, Ps. cxix. Prepare therefore thyself to suffer much more in this decay and old age of the world; for the devil will persecute thee with so much the more fury and violence, because he knows he has but a short time, and must soon be shut up in the lake of fire and brimstone.

In this case, grief is not only lawful, but commanded; for God requires us to put on sackcloth and ashes, Isa. xxii. He desires that we should be sick for the troubles of Joseph, Amos vi. That we should weep with them that weep, Rom. xii. That we should remember the prisoners, as if we were prisoners with them; and that we should suffer with them that are tormented, as being members of one body, Heb. xii. We have good reason to apply to the world, and to the worldlings, David's saying, "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with them that hate peace," Ps. cxx. Jeremiah had never so much cause as we to lament, and to wish that his
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head were dissolved into water, and his eyes were a fountain of tears, to weep day and night, Jer. ix. And the prophet Isaiah had never so much reason to cry out in the displeasure of his soul, "Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me; because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people," Isa. xxii.

It is not therefore without good cause that the Preacher acquaints us, "That the day of death is far better than the day of our birth;" for our birth causeth us to weep, and Death wipes off all tears from our eyes. Our birth discovers that large theatre upon which all worldly tragedies are acted; Death draws the curtain, and puts a period to all such bloody scenes. Our birth casts us into the fire and water of divers afflictions; and death draws us out of those flames and bitterness. Finally, since our life is but a chain of misery, and that Death breaks in pieces the last link; since our life is but a continual fighting, and that death alone is the victory; it is most certain, that Death is not to be feared as an evil, and an enemy, but rather to be desired as a good friend, and a blessing. It is reported of the Thracians, that they buried their dead with expressions of joy; and the inhabitants of the Fortunate Islands sung and danced at the funerals of their dearest friends. I do not commend these foolish examples of extravagant and barbarous people, who were without hope, and without God in the world. Such cannot fear death too much; for, if it freed them from some present and light evil, it casts them into an abyss of excessive torments. Death is an happiness, it brings with it a solid comfort and joy; but it is when we die in God's favour, and in the faith of our Lord Jesus. God hath sufficiently declared the happiness and pleasure of his children's death: for he often abridges the days of those whom he favours and esteems. Because he had seen some good thing in the person of Abijah, the eldest son of Jeroboam, king of Israel, he took him away in the flower of his
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age, 1 Kings xiv. He granted the same favour to Josiah, king of Judah, one of the most religious princes in the world; for he had declared to him, by Huldah the prophetess, "Behold, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered unto thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place," 2 Kings, xxii. It is not to be doubted, but that such are most happy who die in the Lord, and rest from their labours; but I judge them happy in a two-fold manner, that die, or rather cease from dying, in such miserable times, so full of confusion and disorder.

Would you not laugh at a workman, that should grieve when his task is ended, and his labour finished? or at a wayfaring man, who should lament to see the end of his painful journey through prickles and thorns, and the scorching heat of the sun, or the insufferable cold of the winter? or, would you not wonder at one that should vex himself when he is safely arrived in the haven, escaped the waves of a tempestuous sea, and in a shelter from the storm? Wretched man! thou art far more foolish and extravagant than those of whom we speak; for the most painful labours of a workman, the most grievous weariness of a tedious journey, and the swelling waves of a troubled sea, are nothing in comparison of the labours, misery, and troubles of this languishing life. You would, doubtless, esteem it a very great folly and madness in a prisoner, to be sorry for being delivered out of his noisome dungeon; or in a galley-slave, to be angry when he is to be loosed from his chains; or in an offender, to vex when he is freed from torments. What think ye? Is there less madness and extravagance in you, when ye are grieved to see death freeing your souls from this miserable body, where it is imprisoned, withdrawing it from the painful employments of this unhappy age, more grievous and intolerable than that of the galley slaves,

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and discharging you from the troubles of the soul, far more painful than the most insufferable tortures of the body? No, no : death, that thou dreatest so much, is not the death of the faithful, but the end of his miseries, and the last period of all his torments. Noah, (Gen. viii.) when he went out of the ark that stopped upon the mount Ararat, had never so much cause to praise God, and to offer to him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, as we have, when he is pleased to cause us to see the end of the inundation of so many evils and calamities, and to make this floating life, or this living death, to stop upon Mount Sion.

The children of Israel sang songs of thanksgiving when they came out of Egypt, and saw themselves delivered out of a bitter and painful bondage ; where they had been employed in gathering stubble, and burning of brick : But we have much more cause to rejoice, and to sing songs of praise, when Death takes us out of the world, where we suffer a kind of bondage, labouring in vain, and enduring the scorching heat of many afflictions that consume us. Thou findest fault with some of that inconstant people, who murmured to return again to Egypt, when they were upon the borders of the *Promised Land* : but rather find fault with thine own filthy flesh, if it offers to murmur and revolt, when thou art at the entrance of thy celestial Canaan. Joseph rejoiced when the king of Egypt sent for him out of prison, Gen. xiv. And have we not cause to be joyful, when God sends for our souls out of the world, and causeth them to go out of their bodies, which to them is a kind of dungeon ?

If therefore we can speak without impatient murmuring, I conceive we have as good reason as Jonas, to say, " O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me ; for it is better for me to die than to live," Jonas iv. or as the prophet Elias,
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“It is enough, Lord, take away my life,” 1 Kings xix. Such a soul may, in an holy transport, safely speak in the language of David, the man after God’s own heart, “Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name. The righteous shall compass about me ; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me,” Ps. cxli.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a Christian, who comforts himself with the Consideration, that Death delivers us from temporal Evils without Number, which so often assault us.

O Glorious Prince of my salvation! Thou hast hitherto strengthened me against all fears of death ; but now I heartily beseech thee to afford me such grace that death may not terrify nor afflict me, but fill me full of joy and comfort. Suffer me not to follow the example of the Israelites, who forgetting the hardships of their former bondage, and minding only the pleasures and plenty of Egypt, mutinied to return back from the borders of Canaan. Let not the delights of this world, nor the fleshly lusts, possess my soul ; but grant that I may so mind the labours and miseries of this present state, that as a workman contented to see night put an end to his toil ; or as a traveller, either by sea or land, willingly enters the haven or inn where he is to rest ; I may look upon death in the same favourable manner ; and rather, because of the terrible confusions, the calamities, streams of blood, and mischiefs of war, of fire and sword, that threaten and devour us. The lamentable state of thy distressed church chiefly affects me ; this is like a small boat in the midst of roaring and swelling waves, ready to sink, were it not for thy powerful protection, who commandest the boisterous element ; or like Daniel in the lion’s den, in danger to be devoured, didst thou not defend it from the furious beasts. I am weary to behold so many bloody tragedies acted, to continue so long.

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in a world of wickedness, and to be an eye-witness of the sufferings, and to hear the complaints, of thy chosen people. O heavenly Father, I am contented to be freed from this chain of misery, from this life, where so many calamities oppress and afflict me ; calamities of sickness, and distempers that torment my body ; and of other afflictions, of which I am sensible. When wilt thou release me, O my God, from this prison and dark dungeon, that thy blessed angels may convey my soul to a better state, out of the reach of the devil's malice and power ! When wilt thou send for me to introduce me into thy celestial Jerusalem, where I shall, with the rest of thy chosen, glorify thee, my God, and forget all my former sorrows, that shall be swallowed up in everlasting joy ; where no pain or grief shall ever come near us, but shall be secured by thy divine presence from the sense and apprehension of all evil, and be put in possession of an everlasting happiness ! *Amen.*

CHAP. XXI.

The ninth Consolation : Death shall deliver us from Sin, which we may see reigning in the World, and from the Remains of our Corruption.

WHEN God sent angels from heaven to fetch Lot out of Sodom, and secure him from the flames with which he intended to destroy that abominable city, this good man's wife could not forbear looking back ; but she was, in that very moment, sufficiently punished, by being turned into a pillar of salt, the emblem of that holy prudence that this example recommends to posterity. That which made this unhappy woman break the angel's express command, was her affection for the riches, plenty, and pleasures of that country which she had left ; not thinking upon the baseness, filth, and abominable vices, that brought God's wrath and vengeance

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geance upon the unworthy inhabitants. Likewise, when God intends to take us out of the world, and to secure us from the sense of his dreadful judgments; that which causeth us to look back, and hinders us from following the angels that God sends to us, to lead us up to the mountain of our salvation, is, that we think upon nothing but the riches, honours, and pleasures of this wretched world, instead of considering the iniquities that reign here below, wherewith we are defiled, while we continue in this corrupted flesh.

Christian souls, will you prepare yourselves to go to God? And do you wish, that death would comfort and rejoice your hearts, instead of afflicting them? Cast your eyes upon those dreadful vices that are so common, under which the whole creation groans as under an heavy burden. O good God! in what an age are we born! An age like that of Noah; for all the earth hath corrupted its way, Gen. v. Nothing but a deluge of fire is able to purge it. There never was more injustice, perfidiousness, treachery, debauchery, insolence, and envy; never more vanity, luxury, pride, cruelty, blasphemies, impiety, and atheism. We may justly apply to our days that which the prophet Hosea said of the corruption of his time: "There is no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God, in the land: There is nothing but swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery: They break out, and blood toucheth blood," Hos. iv. Therefore we have good cause to make David's prayer, "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour; with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak, Ps. xii. O wicked world, a world overflowing with iniquity, a sink of impurity, a burning furnace, heated with the impure flames of the bottomless pit, and choaked with the smoke of hell! But sin reigns not only in this wretched world, but it defaces also the church of God, and causeth most fearful

disorders among those that bear the glorious name of Christians. They were anciently to be discerned from the rest of the world by their speech, conversation, and behaviour; but the devil hath wonderfully debauched them; he hath blotted out God's image in their souls, hath taken from them that noble distinction that removed far away all difference between them and the world. We cannot with justice say to most Christians of our age, as it was said to the apostle St. Peter, "Thy speech bewrayeth thee?" nor appropriate to them what Isaac said to one of his sons, "Thy voice is the voice of Jacob; but thou hast the hands of Esau;" for they have both the voice and hands of the profane Esau; they speak and live as he did, they publish their crimes with a brazen face, and endeavour to glory in their shame. The air is infected with their profane and filthy language, with their impudent lying, with their fearful oaths, and grievous blasphemies; and the earth is defiled with their horrid sins, and abominable crimes: covetousness, ambition, lust, and all manner of vices, have ascended the throne; they act and command in chief in every place. They who have in their mouths the holy name of the Lord Jesus, and make profession of following his sacred footsteps, give us good cause to take up again St. Paul's lamentation and complaint, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil. iii.

If we would seek in these days for the Christian virtues, where shall we find faith, hope, and charity? Where shall we meet with righteousness, fidelity, holiness, innocence, goodness, meekness, humility, patience, piety, and devotion? You daughters of heaven, what is become of you? We cannot see any more your angelical countenances. We are so far from beholding the delightful beams of your divine pre-

exact, that we cannot spy out your footsteps upon earth. You may thereby understand, Christians, that the Son of God is at hand ; for iniquity abounds, charity grows cold, and there is no more faith upon earth.

In the midst of such woeful corruption, who of us afflicts his soul, as righteous Lot ? Who weeps day and night, as David, a man after God's own heart ? Where can we spy out the fountains of tears of the prophet Jeremiah ? or, the confusion of the face of Daniel ? or, the zeal of Moses and Phinehas, and of St. Paul ? If the angel of God, that went through the midst of Jerusalem, did take a review in our days of the inhabitants of this land, I am afraid he would not find many marked with the letter *Tau* ; nor any weeping and sighing for the abominations that are amongst us. For evil and wickedness are become familiar to us, by the means of an universal infection. Our continual conversation with the vicious accustoms us to their heinous crimes, and to their impious discourses ; as we are accustomed by degrees to breathe in an unwholesome air without aversion, and to hear the fearful downfall of the cataracts of the river Nile without repugnancy.

But we are so far from grieving at the universal inundation of vice in the world, that we ourselves are carried away with the impetuous torrent of corruption. Sin gets upon us insensibly, and overcomes us ; so that the world is not unlike to the house mentioned by God in the xivth of Leviticus ; for it is not only infected with an incommodious leprosy, but it infects all such as dwell therein. The men of the world have an easier task to teach us their vice, than we have to teach and persuade them to virtue ; as a pestiferous body may spread the infection, and give it to a thousand who are sound ; whereas a thousand in perfect health cannot heal one infected with the plague ; so that, as under the ceremonial law the clean vessel sanctified not the defiled ; but the defiled infected, by
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its approaches, such as were clear; evil companies corrupt good manners, and the flames of the most burning zeal are extinguished by the coldness of the age. As lambs cannot feed among briars and thorns, without leaving behind them some of their wool; likewise the harmless and meek souls cannot live among so much cozenage and malice, without losing something of their innocence, and Christian simplicity.

Who is it amongst us that can say, with a safe conscience, as the apostle Paul, "That the world is crucified to him, and that he is crucified to the world?" Gal. vi. Or, who is it that lives in the world without being guilty of its sins, as the fish drinks of the sea-water, and receives nothing of its bitterness? Ps. xxvi. Who can converse in the courts of princes as Joseph in Egypt, as Daniel in Babylon, or as the Queen Esther in the court of Ahasuerus? Is there any that can justly say, "That he hath washed his hands in innocence, and purified his conscience from all dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. Who can speak in this manner, "I have purified my heart, I am clean from my sin?" Prov. xx. In truth, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John i. We have good reason to break out into the prophet Isaiah's exclamation, when he saw God sitting upon his throne, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips," Isa. vi. Or, we may say with the same prophet, "From the sole of the foot unto the crown of the head, there is no whole part." Not only souls that are fixed on the earth, but also such as mount up to heaven by fervent prayers, and devout meditations, have good cause to acknowledge their imperfections, and to ask forgiveness. If any fancy himself to be perfectly whole, and free from all infection, let him look into his conscience, and seriously examine it, and it will happen to him as to Moses; when he put his hand into his bosom, he took

It out again as white as snow, all covered with leprosy, Exod. iv. Where is there a Christian, that feels no law commanding in his members, and struggling against the law of his mind? Who is there, that finds not by experience the truth of St. Paul's saying, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would?" Rom. xii. Gal. v. Without doubt, such as know not, nor ever have felt, the bitter and vehement strugglings of their carnal lusts that war against the soul, 2 Pet. i. cannot conceive what it is to deny themselves, "to put off the old man with his deeds, to crucify the flesh with its affections and filthy lusts," Eph. iv. Such know not what it is to mortify our members, to cut off our right feet and right hands, and to pluck out our right eyes, Matt. x. that is to say, to destroy, and by an holy violence to give a deadly wound to, all our brutal passions, and vicious affections, when they should seem to us as dear and as useful as our hands and feet, and as tender as our right eyes, Col. iii. Matt. v.

If these cursed affections could but declare their names, they would say, as the evil spirits in the Gospel, "Our name is Legion; for we are many." As that devil that possessed the lunatic, mentioned by St. Matthew, "cast him sometimes into the fire, at other times into the water;" thus these carnal lusts labour to cast us, sometimes into the flames of ambition, or into the burning heat of covetousness, or to hurry us headlong into the gulph of unlawful delights, or into the mud of filthy and carnal pleasures. Furthermore, they break the chains and ties with which we imagine to stop their fury; they war and fight against us by day and by night, and at every moment they return to charge us home, and renew the combat. Every where they assault us, and have no more respect for temples and houses of prayer, than for common and public places. As Satan had once the boldness

to encounter with Jehoshua the high-priest before the angel of God; likewise these cursed lusts are so impudent as to attempt us in the most religious assemblies, and the devoutest congregations, as well as where we are engaged in the most hellish and debauched companies of the world.

But these lusts, that war against the soul, are as subtle and malicious, as they are cruel and obstinate: when they perceive us upon our guard, and see that there is nothing to be got, they conceal their weapons and their fire, but it is with a design to surprise and burn us when we are least aware. As there are certain creatures that counterfeit the dead, that men might spare themselves the labour to kill them; likewise this treacherous flesh appears of its own accord as dead, that we might spare it, and not totally deprive it of life. If then we leave it in peace and quiet, it recovers its strength and vigour, and assaults us afresh with its poisonous darts. When we imagine that we have cut up this wretched plant by the root, it grows and breaks forth into bitterness. When we think that we have put out this fire with the tears of our repentance, it kindles again, and bursts forth into fierce flames. As soon as we have cut the cunning serpent to pieces with the sharp knife of true repentance, it gets together; and when it seems to have lost all strength and heat, it recovers again in our breasts, and wounds us to the very heart. In short, as the evil spirit mentioned by our Saviour in the Gospel, when he was driven out of one house, waited for a good opportunity to return; which as soon as he perceived, he took unto himself seven other spirits worse than himself, so that the last condition of that man was worse than the first, Mark xii. Thus, after an afflicting fast, and fervent prayers; after a torrent of contrite tears; when we imagine that we have cast out of our hearts the most dangerous lusts; if we begin to relent, and to open them the door, they burst in again upon us with more fury, and render the sequel of our life far more bitter and unpleasant. But

But if you had not so many sins, and your lusts were not so violent, when the old man should not have so much strength in our members, and the temptations should not overcome us so often; tell me, I pray, Christian souls, in what virtue do you excel? Have you all the beauty, the glory, and perfection, that God requires? Is your holiness without the least spot or blemish? Is your innocence as white as snow, and as bright as the light? Is your zeal as hot and burning as that of the seraphims? Is your charity sincere, without paint or disguise, as that of Christ, who gave his life for you? Do you love God for his name's sake, or because of his excellent perfections? Do you love him with all your heart, with all your strength, and with all your thoughts? Do you love him more than you love yourselves, or any thing in the world? Do you hate all things that he hates? And do you carefully abstain from every thing that displeaseth him? Do you love your neighbour in God, and for the sake of that good God whose image he bears? Do you love him as you love yourselves, without hypocrisy or disguise? Do you never deal otherwise with others, than you would have them deal with you? And do you perform to them the same good offices that you would have them perform to you, if they were in the same condition as you are at present? Do you shine in the midst of the dark night of this age, as so many tapers lighted with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness? Phil. ii. Do you live as citizens of heaven, and as fellow-citizens of the saints, and as the children of God? Phil. i. 5. Or, as such as expect the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ? Tit. ii. Is your heart in heaven, where your treasure should be, and your glory and happiness? And do you walk as persons that ascend up by the steps and degrees of piety to the heavenly Jerusalem? Do you go from faith to faith, from hope to hope? And do you make every day some new progress in holiness? Do you never grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom
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you have been sealed for the day of redemption? Are you immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord? Eph. iv. And do you endeavour to be found in him, without spot or blemish, in peace? 1 Cor. xv. 2 Pet. iii.

Tell me, devout souls, whether you be not as the fire and light? For as there is no flame so pure, but hath its smoke; no star so bright but disappears at the rising of the sun; so there is no life so holy and harmless, but hath its imperfections, and cannot abide the sight of an impartial God, and the exact inquisition of his justice. When we have well prayed, wept, and begged forgiveness, and God hath bestowed upon us, a new heart and a new spirit, after all, we have need that he should enlighten us afresh with the glorious beams of his divine countenance, that he should lead us by the hand, direct us by his wisdom, and accomplish his virtue by our infirmities.

Examine seriously, my dear friends, in what exercise and devotion you are most inclined, and what secret motions you feel in your souls. Who is it that hath the greatest share in your heart and affection? What thoughts lull you asleep, and what are those that awake you? What do you think upon, for the most part? Upon God and his glory, or upon the world and its vanities? Upon heaven and its excellencies, or upon the earth and its riches? Upon paradise and its immortal delights, or upon the flesh and its base satisfactions? And when you meditate upon divine things, are you certain that you perform it with a religious attention, with an inward delight that ravishes and comforts your souls? And when you offer any prayers to God, do you discharge this duty with humility and an holy zeal? Are your hearts and affections carried up to heaven, before you lift up thitherward your eyes and hands? Are your oraisons like the perfume of the saints that come out of golden phials? Are they like the incense

cense of the ancient Israelites, that smoked upon an altar burning with celestial fire? Do they thus proceed from a soul purified by faith, which is more precious than fine gold? Do they come from an heart that is inflamed with a zeal that never dies, and that ascends continually on high? Do you bestow your alms with that earnest and fervent charity that God requires of you? Do you open your bowels to your brethren before you open to them your purse? And do you bestow your hearts upon the poor before you bestow your money?

And for the public devotions which you owe to God, pray tell me with what humility and respect they are performed: Do you call your delight the days dedicated to his glory, and to the celebration of his holy mysteries? Isa. lviii. Or do you look upon them as troublesome? Do they not cause you to complain in yourselves, as those profane Jews spoken of by Malachi, "Behold, what a weariness is it!" Mal. i. Do you go up to the house of God with the voice of melody, and transports of joy? Ps. xli. Or do you go up thither out of custom in a careless manner? When Jacob went up to Bethel to offer sacrifices, he buried under ground all the gods of gold and silver that were in his family, Gen. liii. Likewise you, religious souls, when you intend to go up to offer your spiritual sacrifices in the true Bethel, where God bestows in such plenty his bread from heaven, that gives life to the world; do you not forget to bury all your earthly cares, your carnal lusts? Or else, do you nourish in your hearts all those false gods, of whom the world is so fond? Do you look upon the holy assemblies with an unconcerned eye? Or do you behold them with reverence and respect, as the living images of that glorious church, gathered together before God's majestic throne, which worship him day and night in his holy temple? Are those divine psalms that are there sung, only upon your tongues? Or do you sing them with your hearts to the Lord? Do you think upon the angels' songs, and the holy spirits'

hallelujahs, with sacred transports of joy? Is the word of God only an airy sound that strikes your ears, or doth it reach your consciences? Col. iii. Doth not your heart burn within you while God speaks by the ministry of his servants, and opens to you his holy scriptures? Luke xxiv. Doth this heart of yours burn with an heavenly fire, or with restless impatience, to see the end of your devotions, that you might return to your domestic affairs, to your worldly delights, or to your carnal pastimes? Amos viii. 5. Doth your soul thirst for God, for the strong and living God? Ps. xliii. And is the performing of the holy will of your heavenly Father become your meat and your only delight? John iv. Ps. ciii. In short, do you fly as swift as the blessed angels, when your great God and Saviour offers to you an occasion of advancing his kingdom, of comforting his chosen, and edifying the souls for whom he died? When Abraham offered unto God many beasts in sacrifice, a flight of birds came, and lighted upon his dead offerings, Gen. xv. Thus, when we present unto God the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, and intend to multiply the acts of our devotions, a great number of vain and idle thoughts come to interrupt us. Abraham frightened away those troublesome birds; but it is not always in our power to drive away from our minds these intruding thoughts that disturb us in our devotion. When we will lift up ourselves unto God, and draw near to his sacred throne, our hearts are far more dull and heavy than ever Moses's hands were; so that they fall down again to the earth, and mind earthly things. We need, therefore, that our chief-priest should hold them up: and, furthermore, it is necessary that they should be perfumed with the sweet odours of his most holy sacrifices, Exod. xvii.

If David, a man after God's own heart, intreats that he would be pleased to sanctify the words of his mouth, and the meditations of his heart, Ps. xv. if the prophet Daniel, whom the Holy Spirit styles *a man greatly beloved*, Dan. ix. who

who spent the days and nights in devotion, seeks how to make his prayers acceptable to God; if the prophet Isaiah had need that his lips should be purified with a burning coal taken from the altar, Isa. vi. who will wonder if the meditations of the devoutest souls be so often interrupted? If their prayers be so cold and lukewarm, who can think it strange, that we are not able to pray as we ought? Rom. viii. And that we have need to desire God's holy Spirit of prayer and supplication, who prays and intercedes for us with sighs and groans which cannot be expressed? Zech. xiii. Rom. viii.

That which afflicts most the true believers, is, that when they imagine that they have attained to some kind of perfection in the exercises of piety, they find many times, to their unspeakable sorrow, that they are but beginners, and that they have made no progress at all. For as the stone cast up into the air, falls down of its own accord, by reason of its natural weight; and as the water often heated, becomes as often cold and frozen, because cold is a property belonging to it; likewise our souls, that mount up to God in holy meditations, and zealous prayers, fall down again to these earthly vanities: they become cold and heavy; for these are their natural properties. If God refused the sacrifices of such beasts as were lame and sickly, how will he accept of us, or our devotions, if he should treat us with severity, who are faint in his service, and cannot walk in his ways without halting and stumbling every moment? For these considerations I may apply to the spiritual joy, what was said of the earthly and worldly mirth, "Joy is cut off by sadness," Isa. lxxv. For when we have felt in our breasts this unspeakable joy of the Holy Ghost, and it begins afterwards to abate, it seems to us as if it had taken its flight to heaven, as the smoke of Manoah's sacrifice; then as great sorrow seizeth upon our souls: therefore we may complain and cry out as David, "Will the Lord cast me off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his

his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" And pray in the language of Isaiah, "Lord, awake thy jealousy, and the stirring up of thy bowels that are shut up to me." Finally, if after all the exercises of devotion, if after a serious and settled meditation upon God's holy word, if after fasting and mortification, and prayers and tears, and a constant attendance to the duties of religion, we find any good progress in piety, we may then also perceive vice to proceed out of our most glorious virtues, and perfectest graces. For as the moth enters soonest into the richest stuffs and cloths; thus pride creeps into the noblest souls, and breeds in the most enlightened understandings. As a primitive doctor of the Christian church hath very well observed, All vices are begot by corruption; and by other vices; only pride and presumption proceed from virtue. O how hard a task it is for a man enabled with gifts and perfections that raise him above the vulgar, not to be puffed up with pride, nor deceived with a fond conceit of himself! As the beautiful bird looks upon and admires the dainty and various colours of its wings; thus we behold and admire ourselves, we are in love with our own beauty, and idolize our virtues. Therefore, as the nurse leaves the child sometimes to its legs, and suffers it to fall, that it may know its own strength; and learn to hold faster by the hand; thus God withdraws from us the assistance of his grace, to humble us, and to cause us to implore most earnestly the help, and favourable succours, of his Holy Spirit. When St. Peter felt the sacred flames of that holy zeal that was kindled in his heart, and that sincere love that he had for Christ, he rejoiced, and imagined himself to be strong enough to resist all the powers of hell, and to frustrate all the fiery darts of the devil. This good opinion that he had of himself, and of his own ability, transports him to that confidence, as to contradict our Saviour Christ, and to protest; "Although all should be offended in thee,

thee, yet will I not be offended: though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." This was he that trembled at the voice of a damsel, whose fall and apostasy was as remarkable as his confidence was great; so that he who thinketh he standeth, should take heed lest he fall, Rom. ix.

There is no good-natured child, but is vexed to live amongst such as curse and reproach its parents, and if it should happen to be concerned unawares in the offence, or to occasion the death of him from whom it had its being, it will feel an eternal displeasure. Now, it is certain, that whilst we live in this world, we must spend our time amongst those that blaspheme the holy name of God, and abuse the glory of his eternal Godhead. Moreover, vice and corruption are so universal, that we ourselves offend this Father of mercies and compassions; we add sin to sin, and complete the measure of our iniquities.

Let us therefore conclude from hence, believing souls, that death is not to be feared as an evil, or a calamity, but that it is rather desirable as an advantage, and a blessing. For seeing that it is to be longed for, because it frees us from all the mischiefs and sufferings of the world; we are rather to seek it with God's good leave, because it closeth our eyes, and conveys out of our sight all the sins and abominations that are in the world; and because it stops our ears, and hinders us from hearing the impieties and the filthy discourses that infect the air. Since death is to be embraced with joy, because it delivers our bodies from the diseases that torment them, and our minds from the cares and displeasures that vex and afflict them, it deserves to be welcomed with greater expressions of gladness, because it delivers us from all remains of sin, and puts a period to our natural corruption: so that it is to be esteemed, and looked upon, as the death and destruction of the old man, rather than the death of a true believer.

Samson

Samson rejoiced in his death, because he knew, that in dying, his mortal enemies should die also, and be destroyed with him. We have more cause to rejoice at our death, and to give God thanks at that time; since in our dying, or rather in passing from death to life, we may see the destruction of all the dangerous enemies of our salvation, who are more dreadful to us than the Philistines were to Samson. All the most cruel and barbarous men in the world are not so much to be feared, as the lusts of our filthy flesh, that put out the eyes of our understanding, that cause us to be the devil's sport, and to worship many false gods.

We commonly run out with haste from a place infected with the plague: And should we not make as much speed, by our vows and prayers, to get out of the world, since vice is so infectious and universal all over it, that so many thousand souls are therewith miserably spoiled; since the world is a Babylon, where all manner of debauchery, vice, and folly, are mixed together; where injustice and impiety reign? Have you not greater cause to be transported with joy, when God delivers us from our woeful captivity, than the children of Israel had, when it pleased him to call them out of Babylon? Should they not sing to him, as the Israelites, when the Lord brought them back, and restored them to Sion, We were as those that dream: then were our mouths full of laughter, and our tongues with songs of triumph?

In short, as the Lord Jesus, when he had restored Lazarus to life, and taken him out of his grave, had compassion on him, and could not see him any longer wrapped up in his winding-sheet, and tied with a napkin; therefore he commanded, "Loose him, and let him go:" Thus this merciful Lord, who hath made us to be partakers of the first resurrection, and called our souls out of the noisome grave of our lusts, is moved with compassion for us, when he sees these
wretched

wretched souls drag about them the relics of sin, and some remains of that corruption in which they were wrapped. Therefore he will cause them to hear his sweet and comfortable voice, "Loose them, and let them go." Let them go to the eternal mansions, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the glorious companies of angels, and to the church and congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a true Christian, who comforts himself with this Consideration, That Death shall deliver him from Sin, that reigns so much in the World, and from all Remains of his wretched Corruption.

O Most gracious High-priest, holy, innocent, separated from sinners, exalted above all heavens, who art now shining in light and glory, look upon me from thy sanctuary, and have compassion on my wretched state. Thou understandest well the cause of my grief, O Lord, who searchest the heart, and readest my most secret thoughts, that I grieve to see so much injustice and impiety reigning this day in the world; to see vice and wickedness defacing thy holy church. But that which chiefly increases my pain and aggravates my displeasure is, to find myself guilty, and spotted with the general corruption, and my flesh warring and struggling against the Spirit. The lusts of the flesh not only disturb me, but they get many times the victory, and insult over mine infirmities. Sin appears to me, not only in all its hellish deformity, so that I am thereby ashamed of myself; but I also acknowledge, to the praise of thy grace, that all that is best in me cannot endure an exact inquisition of thy justice. Alas, my God! how imperfect is my piety! how languishing is my devotion! I worship thee too much for custom, and in a very slight manner. I often praise thee with my tongue;
and

and honour thee with my lips, whilst my heart is far from thee. The love that I bear to thee is not pure and fervent; and my charity, instead of being burning, is quite cold, or lukewarm. I have not a sufficient trust upon thy promises, and upon thy fatherly care; my hope is not settled, it doth not fill my soul with heavenly joys and comforts. Thine eyes, O Lord, that see all the secret closets of my heart, and pierce into the depths, are too holy and pure to pass over the sight of evils, and to approve of the ill-favoured features of Satan, yet imprinted in me. Thou discoverest not only my sins, iniquities, and all my evil deeds, but thou also beholdest all the spots and imperfections of my best performances, and of my most glorious acts. My Lord and my God, I am not only grieved to see so much sin in the world, in the church, and in myself, but I am also troubled, that I have not grief enough; that my soul is not sufficiently vexed, as that of righteous Lot; that the zeal of thine house doth not eat me up, as it did the man after thine own heart; that mine eyes are not become a well-spring of tears, as those of the prophet; that I am not heartily concerned for thy church, as thine holy apostle; and that I do not sigh and cry, as thy servants whom thou didst mark with the letter Tau. O wonderful Lord! since it is thy pleasure, wherefore do I not embrace thee with a lively faith, and a sincere repentance? Wherefore do I not strive, by prayers and supplications, to obtain from thee thy most precious blessings, an inward change of myself and spirit, that I may heartily love, fear, and adore thee, as thou deservest? O Lord, I find thou hast not forsaken me, but hast commissioned Death to convey me out of this troublesome and sorrowful abode, to destroy all my mortal enemies, my sins and lusts, and advance me to the freedom of thy children. I am not disturbed at the approach of so great a benefactor, that rejoiceth my heart, and causeth me to embrace and welcome its arrival as thy messenger, sent to draw me out of this Egypt of cruelty and oppression, out of this Babylon of vice

and abomination. I am ready, Lord; when wilt thou free me from these chains and fetters of mortality, to ascend up to my God and Saviour, who is ready to embrace me? Dispatch to me some of thy blessed angels, who may carry me up to thy holy mountain, to thine heavenly Jerusalem, to thy glorious paradise, where no impurity can be admitted, no serpent to seduce us, nor temptations to prevail upon us, where I shall never offend thee, nor grieve thy holy Spirit, whereby I am sealed to the day of redemption. O my God! I am weary to hear thy holy name so often blasphemed, and to see so much impiety and wickedness reigning every where in the world. Haste my departure hence, and the accomplishment of all the glorious promises of salvation to thy church and people; when I shall behold thy face continually, love thee with a perfect love, and worship thee without disturbance in the society of the glorified spirits, and holy angels; when I shall sing forth thy praises in heaven, be clothed with the white robes of thy holy martyrs, and with the seraphim attend upon thy magnificent throne. O my God! grant that thy holy zeal, kindled in my soul, may serve me as a fiery chariot, and a sacred flame, to carry and hasten me up to thy celestial palace, where thou hast prepared for me an eternal mansion, and a blessed inheritance. Amen.

CHAP. XXII.

The Tenth Consolation is, the Glory and Happiness of our Souls at their Departure out of the Body.

IF there were neither punishment nor torment after this life to be feared, the wicked and unbelievers, who prosper in the world, might justly esteem themselves the happiest of all men. And if there were neither glory nor rewards to be expected after death, the righteous and the faithful, who

drink here below cups full of bitterness and sorrow, would be the most miserable of all creatures. The condition of the beasts would appear more happy than theirs: for they enjoy in quiet and peace all the pleasures that their animal nature is able to relish. They are not tormented by so many diseases as vex our bodies; neither do they know the cares and displeasures that consume and fret our minds. They grieve not for the time past, nor trouble themselves with any apprehensions of the time to come. They never feel the fierce assaults of lust. They are ignorant of many of those passions that torment and domineer over our souls. All their pains and sufferings vanish with their breath; so that when they are dead, their sufferings have an end. If we make our eyes the judges of these things, we may say, "The accident that happens to men and beasts is the same accident; as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other." But if we search and examine farther, we shall find more difference than between heaven and earth, between light and darkness: for it is true, that the death of beasts delivers them from the sense of all evils, but doth not introduce them into any real happiness. When it puts an end to their misery, it puts a period to their being, and to all that pleasure and content which they formerly enjoyed; for they die without any hopes of living again.

If we look to the wicked and unbelievers, we shall find, that death deprives them not only of their honours, riches, and of all their pleasures and carnal enjoyments, but puts out their taper in the blackest darkness, and all their greatest delights are lost in a vast sea of bitterness. If Death looseth them from the chain of misery, unto which all the children of Adam are tied, if it frees their bodies from the pain of any temporal evils, it casts their souls into eternal torments. But for the virtuous and believing Christians, if Death is so great a friend to them, because it delivers them from
many

many evils and miseries, it is a greater friend, in regard it opens to them the gate that leads to an endless glory and happiness.

The Son of God had a design to persuade us of this truth, in that remarkable parable of the xvith of St. Luke's Gospel. For at one hand he shews a rich miser clothed in purple and fine linen, feeding upon dainties, and living in much splendour and magnificence; and at the other he discovers to us a poor wretch, named Lazarus, all covered with sores, lying at the rich man's gate, entreating that he might share with the dogs in the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The dogs had compassion on him, and licked his sores. At last, the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. O wonderful change! He that was lately a companion scarce good enough for dogs, now solaces himself in the angels' embraces. He that was lying at the gate of a proud and unmerciful wretch, is admitted into the glorious palace of immortality, and reposes himself in the bosom of a charitable and rich Abraham, where he is satisfied with the bread of the living God, and drinks of the rivers of his pleasures. The rich man died also; but whilst his body was laid in the earth with state and honour, the devils dragged his soul into hell, and cast it into a fire that burns continually, and that nothing is able to extinguish. Therefore our Saviour represents this damned soul crying out of hell-fire, "Father Abraham, have pity upon me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in these flames." In the next verse our Lord shews, how all the complaints of the damned are fruitless, and their tortures remediless. He makes Abraham return an answer to this wretched son, "My son, remember, that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

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The Heathens have looked upon Death as the end of all their afflictions and sufferings; but they have never tasted of the powers of the life to come, they have never had any assurance of future glory and happiness. The spiritual joys, and celestial comforts, God keeps for them that fear him, and worship him in spirit and in truth. These precious riches, and divine excellencies, are only discoverable to the faithful chiefly since the time in which Christ our Saviour hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel. Hitherto I have given you a short survey of the calamities that attend upon us in this mortal state; I have essayed to present to you all the comforts that we may gather from thence, to strengthen a believing soul, and enable it to withstand and endure all the encounters with which it is assaulted in this valley of tears. At present I intend to describe its future happiness, when it is separated from the body and introduced into heaven. I shall, as far as I am able, discover to you that glory and bliss which our souls enjoy, in expectation of the great morn of the resurrection. You must not think to see here any perfect image of our celestial paradise, or any magnificent draught of the advantages reserved for us there. It would be as difficult a task as to paint the sun in its splendour, or to measure the waters of the sea. I cannot find words to express my thoughts; all my conceptions are far below an happiness so perfect, and a glory so sublime. I shall think that I have done enough, if I can but represent to you some few beams of so great a light, if I can but shew some drops of that ocean of heavenly pleasures, in which we shall swim to all eternity.

I shall not deliver any thing from my own fancy, nor offer to speak of that which I have never learned from the great Doctor of our souls. I shall not engage myself in vain speculations, more fit to please and puff up the curious wits, than to comfort and rejoice the devout souls, or satisfy such as hunger and thirst after righteousness. One word from the
mouth

mouth of the Lord is better, and far more worth, than all the reasonings of human wisdom, than all the subtleties of philosophy, than all the arguings and conclusions of the most refined and eloquent ages. In this description I shall not seek mine own glory; nor the applauses of the world, but the glory of my God; and the instruction of souls which he hath purchased with his blood. I desire to be understood of the weakest capacities, as well as of the learned. I hope that such as know the language of Canaan, such as have tasted of the good word of God; and of the powers of the life to come, will not mistake me. For others who have not been accustomed to the relish of spiritual things, to whom the language of God's holy Spirit is insipid and unsufferable; if they are not moved nor benefited by this treatise, I dare say it is none of my fault, but theirs. Therefore, as the wise men, when they travelled to Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was lying in a manger, took the star of the east to their guide; so we, who are marching to our true Bethlehem, where our great God and Saviour is sitting upon the throne of his glory, will follow no other guidance, but that divine light which comes down from heaven. And as it is impossible to number all the stars that shine in the heavens, we are wont to reduce them to certain figures and constellations; thus we will not undertake to shew you every particular of our private meditations, upon this rich and divine subject; but we will discourse to you of the chief heads, leaving the rest to your pious thoughts, and the information of God's holy Spirit.

Whosoever thou art that hast embraced Christ, dead and crucified, by faith and repentance; and knowest thyself united to him, and incorporated into his mystical body, remember to praise this merciful Lord, and rejoice in his salvation. Learn to admire the superexcellent riches of the treasures of his grace, and seriously consider how magnificent and liberal he is to thee. For he intends not only to deliver thee from

all the sufferings and calamities that afflict thee, but he will also raise thee up to the highest and most transcendent felicity. He will not only draw thee out of the deep abyss of death, and eternal damnation, but he will take thee up to the enjoyment of the most blessed life, and an immortal glory. He will not only remove thee from this wretched wilderness, where thou art tormented with hunger and thirst, and exposed to the scorching heat of a burning sun, in poisonous bitings of the fiery serpents, but he will introduce thee into the celestial Canaan, where the milk and honey of the purest joys, and most solid comforts, flow in abundance, and where thou shalt for ever repose thyself, under the refreshing shadow of the tree of life. He will not only deliver thee from the captivity of this miserable world, which is a true Babylon, full of all manner of abominations; but he will lead thee into his holy Jerusalem, and carry thee thither upon his arms; not with an intent that thou shouldst build and repair it with cost and labour, but that thou shouldst behold the glorious and magnificent structures, reared up by him alone from the creation of the world, and that thou mayest be eternally satisfied with his overflowing plenty. He will not only pluck off from thee the filthy rags of sin and corruption, but he will clothe thee with a garment of light, of perfect righteousness and holiness. He will not only wipe away all tears from thine eyes, but he will put into thy mouth songs of praise and thanksgiving. He will not only break the fetters from thy feet, but he will place upon thy head a crown of pure gold. He will not only draw thee out of a black and noisome dungeon, but he will place thee upon a throne of glory and magnificence. He will not only extinguish all the carnal lusts that war against thee, and put an end to all thy troublesome combats, but he calls thee to the fruition of eternal peace and celestial triumph. In short, God will not only separate thee from the acquaintance of sinful and debauched men, but he will cause thee to enter in amongst the thousands of angels, and admit thee to the vision of his glorious face.

When a compounded thing comes to be dissolved, every part returns to its first principle : thus, when man dies, his body returns to dust, from whence it is taken, and the soul returns to God that gave it. As the bird, when its cage is broken, flies away into the air, to seek its liberty and pleasure ; thus when this body is broken to pieces by death, the soul flies above the heavens, where it meets with rest and happiness : or, as it is when the net is torn, the fish falls into the water, where it lives, and enjoys all its delights ; so when death comes to break the strings of this wretched body, the soul enters into the river of living water, and into an ocean of heavenly delights : finally, as the death of our Saviour Christ rent in pieces the veil of the earthly sanctuary, and discovered all its wonderful mysteries ; thus the death of a believer rends the veil of this infirm and sinful flesh, and gives us a sight of the rich treasures and magnificent excellencies of the heavenly sanctuary. You Christians, whom God calls to his glorious rest, who may express the greatness of your future happiness ? It is impossible to form a right idea of it. When your whole lives should have been nothing else but a continuation of misery, and a chain of calamities ; you have now just cause to comfort yourselves, and rejoice in God with unspeakable joy. For when all things are reckoned up, “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” You can lose nothing in this life, but God will restore it to you an hundred times more in his kingdom ; besides, there is no comparison between the advantages of the life to come, and of this mortal state or being. Grieve not, believing souls, to forsake an earth overspread with darkness, full of misery, and all infected with sin, since thy God purposeth to receive thee into new heavens, all enlightened with a divine light, and enriched with endless felicities, where righteousness and holiness sit upon the throne. Grieve not for thy separation from the most pious and regenerated societies, since thou art to be admitted

mitted into the companies of the glorified saints, and blessed martyrs, who have washed and whitened their garments in the sacred blood of the Lamb; since thou art from henceforth to be reckoned in the number, and of the society, of the angels of light, and of the glorious cherubims. Fret not to leave behind thee the holy congregations of the militant church, for thou art going apace to the glorious congregation of the church triumphing; and in a few moments thou shalt find thyself amongst the thousands of angels and saints, that worship God day and night, and adore him who lives for ever. If God has bestowed upon thee worldly riches, leave them without regret or displeasure; for thou art going to possess inestimable treasures, which shall never be taken from thee. If thou art advanced to worldly honours, cast off thy purple and scarlet willingly of thine own accord; for God will shortly clothe thee with an inconceivable glory, that shall never change. When thou shouldest be raised up to the highest and most splendid dignities, when thou shouldest enjoy a great, a flourishing kingdom, come down from thy throne with joy, and let fall thy sceptre, and thy crown; for God calls thee to sit upon a throne that can never be shaken, to an incorruptible crown, and to endless triumphs.

Can there be any town so rich, so great and noble, that thou mayest justly grieve to forsake it, at that time when God intends to make thee a citizen with the glorified saints of the Jerusalem above; where neither crying nor labour, neither fear nor grief, neither poverty nor want, shall ever come near thee; where all the inhabitants are kings, and possess inestimable riches? Is there any dwelling so beautiful and magnificent that should cause thee to depart out of it with sorrow? For God will lead thee into his own palace, all built with fine gold, and precious stones, where he himself is the light, and the Lamb is the sun. Art thou delighted in the enjoyment of some pleasant inheritance here on earth?

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Then consider, that all the inheritances of the earth are nothing in comparison of that incorruptible inheritance which God keeps for thee in heaven, and hath prepared since the creation of the world. Hast thou a pleasant garden, or a rich field? But what are all the gardens of the world, in respect of the heavenly paradise, where the tree of life grows, that brings forth its fruits every month of the year, and where the river of living water, as transparent as crystal, runs continually?

What reason hast thou, christian soul, to grieve, when thou forsakest the pleasures of the world, that thou enjoyest with the children of the earth, or the delights of the body, which are common to thee with the brute beasts; since God will satisfy thee with his most precious delights? For in the blessed vision of his face, thou shalt meet with fulness of joy. Hast thou any friends on earth? Let it not trouble thee to leave them; for, instead of one friend here below, whom thou fanciest to be real and sincere, thou hast thousands in heaven, who will receive thee into the eternal mansions, and embrace thee as their companion, and the partaker of the same glory and happiness. Hast thou any parents or relations? I suppose they are not burthensome to thee, and that thou receivest much more pleasure and assistance from them, than grief and ingratitude; yet thou hast a spiritual parentage in heaven, and eternal relations. Thou hast in the mansion-house of thy heavenly Father, a great number of brothers and sisters, with whom thou shalt live in a blessed unity, as members of one body, governed by the same spirit, and inflamed with the same zeal.

Thou husband, whom Death snatcheth away from thy beloved wife, seriously consider, that God will unite thee to himself by an inseparable union, and that he purposeth to take up to him some part of thyself, that thy expectations, thy hopes, and affections, might be now in heaven. And

thou also, O woman ! whom Death plucks out of the embraces of thy dear and loving husband, remember that thou hast a Husband also in heaven, who hath espoused thee to himself for ever in righteousness, in mercy, and compassion; a Husband-always living and glorious ; a Husband, who loves thee with an eternal love that is stronger than death ; whose affections are 'inflamed for thee in such a manner, that the water of all the seas and rivers is not able to extinguish ; a Husband, who bears with all thine infirmities, and hath redeemed thee from all thy sins ; a Husband, who hath not spared for thee his precious blood, that he might procure for thee the glory and happiness of his kingdom ; who invites thee to his heavenly nuptials, having prepared and appointed for thee a room in the banqueting-chamber, where thousands of glorified saints shall sit, and there the melodious harmony of angels shall be heard ; a Husband, who calls to thee, reacheth out to thee his hand, who opens his bosom to receive thee. If thou hast found any satisfaction and pleasure in the company of that person, whom God hath given thee for an assistant and mate, judge from thence, what angelical delights thou shalt meet with in the ravishing embraces of thy heavenly Spouse. The most pleasant marriage days are gone as a shadow ; but the day, which shall bring thee to the celestial Bridegroom, shall never depart nor darken, and the heavenly contentments shall abide and continue with thee for ever, without the least distate.

You beloved and loving children, who are yet in the bosom of a good father, or of a tender-hearted mother, suffer death patiently to remove you far from them, and depart with joy to that good God, that will receive you as his children, satisfy your souls with the milk of his most blessed consolations, and will make you his heirs, and co-heirs with his Son Jesus Christ; say to him as the holy prophet, " When my father and my mother shall forsake me, yet the Lord will receive me," Isa.

lxvi. Rom. viii. Psal. xxviii. And you, fathers and mothers, that have a tender affection for your children, if death takes them out of your sight, and deprives you of the comfort of their company, grieve not as those who have no hope. For when they should be ever so accomplished, when they should always have given you pleasure and divertisement, what are all these pitiful delights that pass away in a moment, and change oftentimes into bitterness and sorrow, if compared with the eternal pleasures which we shall enjoy in the contemplation of God's glorious face, and in a familiar acquaintance with his divine wisdom? You shall not return to them, but they shall in their time go to you. So that you shall shortly see one another in the dwelling of the Father of spirits, Matt. xxvii. Death separates you for awhile; but the Author of your life will bring you together for ever.

Finally, of what age and condition soever you be, if you perceive the breath of your life to stop, never grieve nor murmur at it. For if death separates you from yourselves, it brings you nearer to God, your chief good; and, instead of a wretched and perishing life, it will promote you to the fruition of an eternal and ever happy one.

If we had lived in the days when our Lord was on earth, there is none of us but would have looked upon it as a singular happiness and honour to have been admitted with Peter, James, and John, when they went up to the mount Tabor, to be eye-witnesses of our Saviour's transfiguration. A far greater honour and happiness Death is endeavouring to procure you; it will usher you up to Mount Sion, it will transport you above the heavens, where you shall behold more excellent wonders than ever the apostles beheld upon Mount Tabor. For you shall not only see this glorious Saviour whiter than snow, and brighter than the sun, but you yourselves shall be transfigured with him, and clothed with an
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exceeding great glory. The holy apostles saw but two prophets ; but you shall see all the prophets, all the patriarchs, apostles, confessors, martyrs, the holy and blessed Virgin, and in general all the saints that reign and triumph in heaven. The apostles had a sight of this glory of our Saviour, as of a flash of lightning ; it continued with them but a moment ; for soon after they came down from that holy mountain, and were again exposed to the same temptations as before, and besieged by the same calamities. It will be otherwise with thee, O christian soul ; thou art flying up to heaven, from whence thou shalt never descend, till the great day of the glorious resurrection of our bodies. Thou shalt not be assaulted any more by any temptations. Thou shalt have no more enemies to overcome, nor bitterness to digest. Thou art going to reap and enjoy the blessed fruits of thy Saviour's victories, and to be eternally satisfied with the celestial pleasures, that are at the right hand of the God of mercies.

We esteem St. John highly privileged, because the Lord gave him a sight of his glory, of the riches and divine excellencies of the New Jerusalem. But how much greater is thy privilege ! For that which this holy apostle beheld in a vision and a dream, God will discover to thee in truth and reality. Let thine heart listen, and thou shalt hear the voice of thy Saviour, calling already to thee out of heaven, as unto his beloved disciple, *Come and see* ; come, my good and faithful servant ; come my son [or my daughter] and I will shew thee my glorious and magnificent city ; I will shew thee the palace of my glory, and all the splendour and state of my kingdom. Come, and I will expose before thine eyes all my riches, treasures, and my most precious crowns. Come, and I will cause the river of living water, which issues from my throne, to run before thee, and the eternal delights that proceed from my face. I will shew thee all these heavenly treasures and glory, all the angelical satisfactions, not in the
visions

visions of the night, in an extasy, in a holy ravishment of the mind, or in a prophetical elevation of the soul; but I will discover them to thee in reality and truth, by the assistance of a purer and more glorious light than that of the sun. I shall not only cause thee to behold this glory, these treasures and delights, but I will cause thee to be a partaker of them for ever. For as thou hast pledged me in the cup of my bitterness and sorrows, as thou hast continued with me in my afflictions, and hast been faithful unto death; I will give thee the kingdom, as the Father hath given it to me. I will give thee the crown of life, and will cause thee to swim in the vast ocean of the eternal pleasures. Thou shalt not only see all my treasures, all my pomp and glory; thou shalt not only behold the rivers and the seas of my most wonderful delights, and shalt be a partaker of them; but thou shalt see me as I am in my kingdom. I will pull off the veil that covers me, and scatter the clouds and mists that hide me, so that thou shalt look upon me without impediment, and behold me face to face. Thou shalt be transformed into my likeness, and be satisfied with my resemblance. You see therefore, Christians, that though Death appears to us dreadful and ill-favoured, we may apply to it what David said of Ahimaaz, that 'tis the messenger of good news; notwithstanding its hideous veil and cloak of darkness, we have just cause to liken it to the chariot of fire, that carried up the prophet Elijah into heaven.

From what we have said, you may easily conclude with the wisest of kings, "That the day of our death is better than the day of our birth." For our birth makes us inhabitants of a miserable earth; but death carries us into a paradise of heavenly delight. Our birth exposeth us to severe encounters, but death lifts us up upon a chariot of triumph. Our birth forceth from us crying and tears; but death makes us sing for joy. Our birth brings us into the light, but death causeth

causeth us to shine as the sun. Our birth makes us live a sensual and animal life, of a short continuance; but death introduces us into a spiritual and angelical life, that shall continue for ever. In short, our birth casts us into the arms of death; but death leads us to the well-spring of life. Therefore the apostle St. Paul confesseth, that "Christ is gain to him both in life and death," Phil. i. 21. And for the same reason the primitive Christians could not endure to see any person afflicting himself for the decease of believers, because 'twas the day of their deliverance, rest, glory, and happiness. They commonly forbade all manner of mourning; for they judged, that 'tis not proper that we should clothe ourselves in black and sadness, for their sakes who are clothed in white and shining garments of light and immortality. They looked upon this life as upon a continual death; and upon death, as upon the beginning of a real life. Therefore they styled the anniversary day of the martyrs' death, "the day of their nativity." From hence proceed the usual songs of praise, which they commonly sang to perpetuate their blessed memories.

I need not cause you to take notice, devout souls! of the notable difference between the death of God's children, and the death of the wicked. 'Tis as great as between heaven and earth, between paradise and hell. Balaam had good cause to desire the one, and fear the consequence of the other. We have as much reason to cry out as he did, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

You have heard how Adrian, an heathen prince, made his address to his soul, "My little soul, my little darling, hostess and companion of my body; thou art going to wander up and down in cold, obscure, and fearful places; thou shalt never delight thyself in jesting, as thou hast been wont; thou shalt never give me any more pastime." But when the christian
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soul goeth out of this mortal tabernacle, he may talk to it in another manner : O my soul ! pleasant hostess, and heavenly companion of this weak body, thou canst not wander out of thy way ; for thou hast a faithful and a knowing guide. Thou art already in the blessed company of angels that shall bear thee upon their wings ; thou art going to a noble palace, enriched with light and glory, and blessed with the sincerest and most heavenly delights. Thou shalt meet with no more sorrows, grief, nor displeasure, which so often disturb thy quiet here upon earth ; thou shalt rejoice for ever with all the glorified saints, and sing songs of praise and thanksgiving with all the celestial spirits. O my soul ! how great is that glory and happiness which thou mayest justly expect from thy God, who hath both an infinite power, and an infinite mercy and goodness, since he hath endeared thee unto himself, by giving his own life to free thee from death, and eternal damnation ! If your friends, or rather your enemies on this occasion, weep and are grieved at your departure ; if they labour, by their tears and sighs, to move your heart, and to persuade you to remain yet here below ; speak to them as St. Paul did to those that wept about his neck, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart !" Acts xxi. St. Paul was then in his journey to Jerusalem, where he was to be bound, imprisoned, and to be carried to the city of Rome, where he was to die upon a scaffold, by the separation of his head from his body ; notwithstanding, St. Paul's friends comforted themselves with this expression, "The will of the Lord be done." And what mean ye, my friends ! will ye stop me from going up to a heavenly Jerusalem, at the gates whereof I must cast off all these chains and fetters of mortality ? I must leave all my sins, my sufferings, and grief. I shall enter into a new glory, into the ever-blessed company of saints and angels. If your love be sincere and real, prefer my felicity and rest to the small satisfaction that you find in my company here below. Consider that in the house of my God, and in

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the vision of his glorious face, I shall find every moment more joy and pleasure, than I should have met with upon earth in thousands of ages; all the pomp and splendour of the world, all the glory and state, its riches and treasures, its pleasures and delights, are mean and contemptible to those I am going to enjoy in heaven, as a few drops of water to a boundless sea, or as a flash of lightning to the noon-day sun. Must the blind passion which you have to enjoy me, hinder me from seeing the face of my God, and heavenly Father? Suppose I were now shut up with you in some dark dungeon, and bound with the same chain, would you rather see me your companion, to continue in your misery and sufferings, or to behold me at a distance at liberty, in the fruition of a perfect satisfaction? Pretend not that we shall never see one another any more. For can you be so great an unbeliever, as to doubt of God's mercy, that intends to bring us together again in heaven? Death separates us for a moment; but the Prince of Life will unite us together for ever in his Father's house, whither he is gone to prepare a place for us. O devout and religious soul! by such language as this thou shalt be able to mollify the hardest hearts, and prepare them to behold thy translation into heaven, as Elisha, when he saw his master's rapture. If they feel any displeasure and grief for thy separation from them, they will have more joy and comfort to consider, with the eye of faith, that extraordinary glory and happiness into which God intends to receive thee, through his infinite goodness and mercy.

If it happens otherwise, and that thou art to deal with weak minds, whose love is blind, and whose passions are so unreasonable as to resist God's appointment, and hinder thy promotion to happiness; thou must overcome by the strength of God's grace, and the assistance of his holy Spirit, all the furious reluctances of nature. Thou must imitate St. Peter, when he saw our Saviour Christ in his transfiguration upon

Mount Tabor, he forgot his family, and all the dearest enjoyments in the world ; therefore in that excess of joy he cried out, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." In the same language must you speak, christian souls. I dare be bold to affirm, if your mind is raised up by faith in heaven, to behold Jesus Christ shining in light and glory, and surrounded by all the holy angels, and immortal spirits ; as soon as you shall have but the least relish of paradise, you will be so ravished with that extraordinary happiness, that you will easily forget the most lovely enjoyments of the earth, unto which you have devoted your affections. So that in that transport of joy you will be ready to burst out in this language, My Lord, and my God, I am sick with love for thee ; I wish for nothing but for thy glorious presence ; my chief happiness is to be with thee, and to behold thy face, where I see already so much light and love ! I confess, we shall not say as St. Peter, " Let us build tabernacles ;" for we shall ever be concerned, as soldiers and travellers, in fights and journies. We shall not say, Let us build an house, that we may dwell with thee and thy blessed company. For I see, O God, with the eye of faith, the palace which thou hast built from the foundation of the world, where thou hast prepared a place for me. Lord, open to me the gates of this glorious palace, that I may enter in, and sing forth thy divine praises.

My dear friend, shall the miserable Pagans, who never fasted of the heavenly gift, who were never made partakers of the spirit of grace, nor of the powers of the life to come ; the Heathens, who were without hope, and without God in the world ; shall they march courageously to meet death : and wilt thou, that hast some foretastes of the happiness of heaven, and hast seen some beams of its glory, canst thou not resolve to depart out of the world ? Shall a Seneca, who hath no other means to strengthen himself but the persuasion of his vain philosophy ; who hath no expectation of advantage

of the life to come; shall such an one look with steadfast countenance upon his blood and life gushing apart out of his veins? And thou, my brother, hast thou been brought up under the tuition of an eternal wisdom; dost thou embrace, by faith the glory and felicities prepared for thee by God; and art not able to look upon death with resolution and courage? and canst not leave the world with expressions of joy? Shall Socrates, whose infirm body was animated by a sinful soul, and who had no manner of antidotes against death, drink up that poison that was mixed for him, as a pleasant potion? And thou, Christian, who art animated by the Spirit of the living God, that seals to thee his great and most precious promises; thou, Christian, who enjoyest the earnest of that inheritance prepared for thee in heaven; shalt not thou be able to swallow down, with content, the cup that death holds out to thee? Thou hast a powerful and an infallible antidote against this poison; for, after this bitter cup, thou art going where thou shalt drink at leisure out of the rivers of eternal pleasures. Shall it be said, that in the Jews' houses, at the time of death, the sound of instruments of music was heard, together with cryings and lamentations; and at thy dwelling, who hast an interest in Christ crucified, and seest him reigning and triumphing in heaven, there shall be nothing heard but weeping and sighing, and no praising God, nor giving of thanks?

Finally, in regard so many persons of all ages, sexes, and conditions, have desired death, to be free from all earthly evils and calamities; hast not thou greater reason to wish for it heartily, when it shall please God, that thou mayest enter into the fruition of the advantages and happiness of the heavenly life? How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men, or rather thy children, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, put their trust under the shadow of thy wings; they shall be
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fully satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt cause them to drink out of the rivers of thy pleasures.

If thou be passionately desirous to taste of the angelical delights, and relish the divine pleasures that flow from the throne of God, and of the Lamb; if you be really athirst for God, will not you speak in David's language, Psa. xliii. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." "When shall I come and appear before God?" And elsewhere, Psa. xliii. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." It is not possible to taste of the heavenly joys, but we are constrained to cry out as the man after God's own heart, "How grieve are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," Psa. lxxxiv.

Consider well, believing soul, what vast difference there was between the earthly Jerusalem for which David was so passionate; and the heavenly Jerusalem where God intends to receive thee. What great disproportion was there between the little stream of Shilo, and the large river of paradise; between the material tabernacle, the mercy-seat covered over with fine gold, upon which the cherubims stretched out their wings, and the immaterial sanctuary of heaven, of Jesus Christ the true ark of the covenant, in whom are hid the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in whose glorious presence the seraphims cover their faces with their wings! Col. ii. How contemptible were the sacrifices, oblations, and burnt-offerings, of the children of Israel, in comparison of the spiritual sacrifices that are presented to God in heaven, in

comparison of the offerings burning there entire in the flames of an holy zeal, and a perfect charity: And what was all the frankincense of Arabia, and the sweet smells of the Holy Land, which were consumed in God's presence, if compared with the sacred perfumes that mount up out of the golden phials that are in the hands of all the members of the glorified church! Since David esteems a door-keeper of the house of the Lord an happy man on earth, how great shall thy glory be, and extraordinary thy happiness, O believing Christian! for thou art going to be advanced to the most honourable room of that celestial dwelling, which God hath built with his own hands. To this purpose, our Lord Jesus hath made thee this gracious promise, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name," Rev. iii. 12. If this great King was so desirous to hear the Levites singing the praises of God with their tongues and instruments of music; how much more passionate should we be to hear the harmonies of heaven, and celestial hymns of the holy angels, arch-angels, cherubims, seraphims, and of the glorified saints, who have in their mouths every one a new song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb!

When the shepherds heard some few expressions of the angels' songs, who praised God at the nativity of the Son of God, they began to rejoice with an exceeding great joy, that they left their flocks, and ran in haste to look upon the child Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem. And thou, devout soul, thou hearest already the sweet anthems of paradise, and the ravishing concerts of thousands of angels; thou knowest that thy Saviour sits there upon a throne clothed with glory, and divine majesty. And wilt thou not forsake all the base employments

playments of this sensual and animal life, to go and see this wonderful Saviour, who expects thee, and intends that thou shalt sit also with him upon his throne?

Zaccheus climbed up upon a sycamore-tree, with an earnest desire to behold the Lord Jesus as he passed by, when he was in a state of humiliation and abasement. Shouldst not thou be as earnest, O christian soul, to fly up above the heavens, to see this merciful Saviour in the state of his glory and elevation; and to have him always in thine eye for ever and ever? When our Lord was come into the house of this poor publican, he told him, "that salvation was that day come to his house." And shalt not thou, O blessed soul, have more reason to say, when thou shalt enter into the palace of this glorified Redeemer, "I am this day entering into my salvation, and my glory!"

We highly esteem Jacob's happiness, when he was in Bethel, because God appeared to him in that admirable vision mentioned in the xxviiith of Genesis; but if thou art an Israelite without guile, I esteem thee to be in a more happy and more blessed state. Thou hast more reason to break out in Jacob's language, "This is God's house, and the gate of heaven." Jacob saw the heavens open; but he was not admitted into them at that time; but now God opens these heavens to receive and lodge thee for ever. The holy angels of God went up and down the ladder, that reached up from the earth to heaven, but they left Jacob at the bottom of this ladder; whereas the angels that are about thee, are come down to cause thee to ascend up with them, or rather to carry thee upon their hands, and bring thee to Christ, typified with this mysterious ladder. Jacob saw God at the top of this ladder, but he was to go afterwards to Padan-aram; he was to travel up and down, to suffer many inconveniences, the heat of the day, the frost of the night, the displeasure of his father-in-

law,

law, and his treachery ; he was to fly from the cruelty of his brother Esau ; nay, more than that, he was forced to struggle and wrestle with God himself. Whereas here is now the end of thy pilgrimage, of all thy troubles and encounters. Thou shalt never feel the burning and scorching heat of thy afflictions. Thou shalt be no more tortured with the fears and apprehensions that now congeal thy blood. Thou shalt no more stand upon thy guard for fear of deceits, and violent dealings of men. Thou shalt wrestle no more with God by prayers, supplications, and tears ; for they shall be no more in use. God shall load thee with his most extraordinary blessings, and bestow himself upon thee.

The prophet Moses wished very passionately to see but for a moment God's face, whereof he had beheld so many glorious expressions. And shouldst not thou desire as passionately to see that beautiful and ever-shining countenance in its glory and splendour ? O religious soul, who art inflamed with divine affection, God will shortly gratify thy desires : so that thou mayest say to him as one of the prophets, " Thou shalt cause me to know the way of life ; in thy face is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

Christian, if thou hadst but as much faith and assurance, as there is glory and happiness in heaven ; with what excess of joy wouldest thou leave the world, and all its vanities, to ascend up to the magnificent palace, purchased for thee with the precious blood of thy Redeemer !

Jonathan's eyes were once enlightened, when he tasted some honey with the end of his rod, which he had found in a rock ; and thou, believer, if thou hast by faith tasted the divine sweetness that proceeds from Christ, the Rock of Eternity, thine understanding will be all enlightened. Thou shalt need no other consolation against death ; for death itself shall

shall fill thee full of consolation, and real joy; so that thou shalt have cause not to speak only as Jacob, "O God, I expect thy salvation," Gen. xlix. but as king David, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of the Lord; our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem," *Psa. cxii.* By this means thou shalt not only expect with patience, and embrace with joy, the blessed news of this glorious salvation; but thou shalt endeavour to hasten its coming by thy continual and repeated sighs. O say God, when wilt thou stretch out to me from above thy glorious arms? When shall I see plainly thy divine and glorious face? When wilt thou cause me to drink out of the rivers of pleasures? How blessed is the man whom thou hast chosen, and taken to thyself, to dwell for ever in thy courts! Such shall be satisfied with the good things of thy house, and of thy glorious palace.

Job. vii. Joseph marched out of his prison in haste, to go to the palace of the king of Egypt; and hast not thou as much reason to make as much haste out of the prison of this wretched body, O believing soul, that thou mayest ascend up to the palace of the King of kings, who intends to instal thee into such a glorious state, in comparison of which all the pomp of Pharaoh, and of all the kings and princes of the earth, is nothing but as the hoar-frost of the night?

Mat. ix. Bartimeus forsakes willingly his mantle to creep to the Lord Jesus, when he called him; and thou, christian soul, wilt not thou leave this body, which is as a troublesome garment to thee, to ascend up to this divine Saviour, who intends to cure thee of all thy distempers and diseases; and who purposes to load thee with his blessings and unspeakable favours? He will not only bring thee to behold the refreshing light of heaven; but he will also cause thee to shine as the sun for ever and ever.

Religious soul, cast off this spotted garment of the flesh ; and so much the more cheerfully, because God holds out in his hand a garment of light and glory, which he will bestow upon thee. For it shall happen to thee as to the prophet Elijah, who having let fall his mantle, he found himself all encompassed about with flames of fire, and an extraordinary light. As soon as thou shalt cast off this miserable body, thou shalt be surrounded with celestial flames, in which thou shalt mount up to heaven into the dwelling of immortality, where thou shalt be like God, who clothes himself with light as with a garment. To this purpose the words of the prophet Zechariah, concerning the high-priest Joshua, are very proper ; he was arrayed with filthy garments, but an angel from heaven calls to them that waited before him, "Take away the filthy garments from him, and clothe him with change of raiment ; let them set a fair mitre upon his head." This, O christian soul, is the true image of thy condition at thy departure, and the lively portraiture of thy future happiness. At present thou art clothed with a body undermined by sickness and labour ; thou bearest about thee the relics of the old man ; but, behold, God calls to thee from his holy sanctuary, Take away from him this old garment, pluck off all remains of his old clothing bespotted with sin, where the devil's image is yet to be seen, and give him the sacred ornaments of a royal priesthood ; clothe his soul with a long garment whited in the blood of the Lamb ; gird it about with the ephod of righteousness ; put upon its head an incorruptible crown, and in its hand a golden phial, that it may for ever offer up the heavenly perfumes in company of the glorified saints.

If, after all this, O Christian ! thou doubtest of the felicity and glory of such as die in the Lord Jesus, hear what an apostle saith, who was himself ravished up into the third heaven, where he beheld in this glorious palace unspeakable things : " We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle

tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked; for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. And listen to what the Holy Ghost saith, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

Would to God, that we had some other word, besides that of *death*, to express the wonderful and happy change that we make when we go out of this miserable world! For, to speak properly, we cannot be said *to die*, when we leave a place full of misery, to enter into another blessed with an endless felicity; when we exchange a laborious state for a peaceable and happy rest; when we come off from a cruel war to enjoy the pleasures of everlasting joys; when we pass through death to an endless life; and forsake a tomb, to mount up upon a throne. Christian soul, remember thy beginning, and thine end: consider what thou art, from whence thou proceedest; and whither thou goest. Thou art a living image of thy Creator, and a beam of his glory; thou art of a celestial and immortal nature. God hath washed and cleansed thee in the blood of his Lamb without spot or blemish, and sanctified thee by his holy Spirit. He hath brought thee to a disposition fit to enter into his holy city, and he is ready to admit thee to the fruition of his glory; thou hast "fought a good fight, finished thy course, and kept the faith;" 'tis therefore high time that thou shouldest receive the crown of life. Thou hast this precious crown already in thy hands. Thou art at the gate of heaven, at the entrance of paradise.

O therefore, believing soul! go with joy and gladness to

this great God, that calls thee; to this merciful Saviour, that stretcheth forth his hands to thee, and opens his bosom to receive thee. Go into the glorious company of angels, and blessed spirits. Take upon thee these beautiful robes of light, with which thine heavenly Father will clothe thy nakedness; and accept this immortal crown that he offers to thee. Go, and satisfy thyself with the bread of the kingdom of heaven, and remove thy thirst with the crystal waters of that "river of pleasure, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb." Go, and behold the face of the Father of Lights; be happy with his divine resemblance, and be transformed into his glorious image.

O blessed soul! seest thou not already the heavens open, and Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father, holding out his hand to thee, offering to receive thee into his glorious rest? Seest thou not the angels of heaven, clothed in white raiment, coming to transport thee out of this miserable state? Seest thou not how thou art already encompassed about with light, and celestial flames? Dost thou not relish the sweetness of paradise? Is there not an heaven already in thy heart? Hearest thou not the hymns of the glorified spirits? Hath not the Lord caused thee to understand that sweet and comfortable voice sounding in thine ear, "Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt be this day with me in paradise. Come, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Feelest thou not thyself lifted up above all earthly and perishing things? Dost thou not fly upon the wings of faith and repentance to the throne of God's glory? Dost thou not cast thyself into paradise, into the arms of almighty God, into the bosom of the Lord Jesus, to rest there for ever, and to be satisfied with the good things which "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and which are not entered into the heart of man; but which God hath prepared for them that love him?"

A PRAYER

A PRAYER and MEDITATION of a Christian Soul, which prepares to depart out of its Body, and comforts itself in the Contemplation of the Glory and Happiness of Paradise.

O GOD! the Author of my being, and the sovereign Lord of my life, thou seest all the motions and dispositions of my soul! Thou knowest that I have wholly resigned myself into thy hands, and desire nothing else but to depend upon thy good pleasure: speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth; here I am to do thy will, O God. As the Israelites waited for the motion and order to remove their camp; so I am as ready at thy command to leave this earthly tabernacle. And as the golden cherubims were always upon their feet, their wings stretched out, and their faces toward the mercy-seat; in like manner, I desire to be in a posture to take my flight up to thy mercy-seat, to my Lord Jesus, the propitiation for my sins, as soon as thou shalt stretch forth thine hand unto me, to take me out of this troubled sea, and out of this dark night of affliction. I am willing to go to thee, blessed Saviour, and to leave my ragged garments behind, as blind Bartimeus, or as Elijah to cast off this mantle of the flesh; that I may ascend unto thee in a bright chariot of fire. I am desirous to quit this earthly tabernacle; for thou hast prepared for me a more lasting dwelling in heaven. Let my body return to the dust from whence it proceeds, so that mine immortal being, a beam of thy glory, may be admitted into thy favour, mercy, and presence, unto which it desires to return. I doubt not of thy gracious reception of it, since thou hast promised to give the crown of life to all such as persevere in thy faith and fear; and the rewards of immortality, to such as fight under thy banner, and overcome Satan, sin, and the world. By thy grace and power, I have vanquished these enemies of my salvation, and have no other to contend with but Death. **O**
strengthen

strengthen me with thy holy Spirit, that I may conquer this last enemy, that I may find by it a passage to thine eternal glory and happiness. I trust upon thy fatherly goodness and unchangeable affection, upon that intimate relation with which I am honoured, and am confident thou wilt not forsake me in my urgent necessity and agony. Send to me thy good angels, that they may carry me upon their wings, and introduce me to thy heavenly kingdom, and may see thy salvation complete. I long to be with thee in thy celestial Jerusalem, and enter into thy holy sanctuary, into the society of the glorified saints, and immortal spirits, that minister before thy throne. I am sensible of thy saving grace bestowed upon me, and mine affections are already separated from the world; at present all my thoughts and expectations are with thee, my good God. Receive me into thy magnificent palace, that I may see thy face in glory, and embrace my blessed Redeemer. And before I go hence, speak to my soul in a language answerable to its vehement longings, and let me hear this comfortable saying, This day thou shalt be with me in paradise. I am already sensible of that joy that awaits me in thy presence, where it shall be full and complete; of that peace and happiness, into which I am going apace. I have already the foretaste of thy heavenly pleasures, which must needs exceed all that we can say or think. I see the heavens open, and my Lord Jesus ready to receive me. Into thy hands I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed it. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXIII.

The eleventh Consolation, The glorious Resurrection of our Bodies.

WHEN God created angels, he gave them a spiritual and altogether celestial nature, that had no affinity with matter. I confess, that these heavenly spirits have of-
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ten appeared in human bodies to the ancient patriarchs; but those bodies were extraordinary and miraculously formed by the power of almighty God for such occasions. Besides, those holy spirits were not in those bodies as the soul is in ours, quickening and animating them in the same manner; but only as the pilot is in the ship that he governs. Therefore as soon as they had fulfilled the work about which they were employed by God, they left those bodies without prejudice to their beings, as the pilot leaves and goes out of the ship when he hath brought it to the desired haven. All the happiness of these glorified spirits consists in this, that God hath confirmed them in his grace and love, and admitted them for ever to a continual contemplation of his glorious face. It is not so with our souls; for although they be also spiritual, and of an heavenly substance, God hath not created them to be alone, and to subsist at a distance from all matter, but to live in the pleasant company of those elemental bodies, which he hath fashioned in a most artificial manner. When he creates an human soul, and conveys it into an organized body, it is not that it should be there as water in a vessel, or as a king in his palace; it lives not there as an assisting form, or as an outward cause of the body's operations; but it is united to it by a very strict union, and serves as an essential form. It is the principle of our life, the eternal cause of motion, of sense, and of understanding. So that to speak properly, man cannot be said to be altogether of a spiritual nature, as the holy angels; nor a single body, as the sun and stars; but he is made up of both. Therefore, if our souls wish to depart out of this earthly tabernacle, it is not out of any hatred of it as it is in itself and its proper nature; for none ever hated his own body; every one seeks to nourish and cherish it: but by accident, because of the vanity and corruption to which sin hath enthralled it, we desire earnestly to depart out of it to a place where righteousness and true holiness reign, that we might be with the Lord Jesus, to be-

hold

hold him nearer. It is therefore an undoubted truth, that unless the body partakes of the same happiness and glory as the soul, man cannot be said to be perfectly and entirely happy. I confess, it is a great joy to us, to know that when our soul casts off this earthly body, it enters into the eternal dwellings of heaven, whither it goes to behold the face of the Father of Lights; but this holy joy is disturbed with sad reflections, and this heavenly sweetness is strangely altered with the bitter considerations of this poor body cast into the earth, and left to the mercy of the crawling worms. For it is a most hateful thing to view our body rotting and turning to ashes; that body that was our pavilion, our palace, nay, more than so, that was half part of ourselves. Therefore if we will render our joy accomplished, and apply an effectual comfort to our souls, we must nourish and entertain this pleasant assurance, that the ruin of our bodies, for which we lament so much, shall not be eternal; but as our body falls down by death, it shall rise again one day at the general resurrection. This is one of the noblest and most excellent mysteries of our Christian religion, and one of its most glorious advantages. The wisdom of the world, with all its reasonings, and the Heathen philosophy, with its rarest subtleties, could never attain to this wholesome and comfortable doctrine. Therefore when St. Paul preached to the Council of Athens, he was heard with admiration, until he had spoken to them of the resurrection; as soon as he began to mention that, they laughed at him.

Therefore, while human reason remains in its darkness and natural ignorance, it cannot of itself find out this glorious mystery. But as soon as it is enlightened with the Light from above, it discovers the most remarkable circumstances, and acknowledges the justice and necessity of the future resurrection of our bodies.

There are three things to be considered in this subject: First,

First, Since rewards and punishments ought to be proportionable and answerable to him who is to punish and reward, we must of necessity believe the resurrection of our body ; otherwise the pains of the wicked cannot be extreme, and the happiness of the godly can never be absolute and perfect.

Secondly, As when a traitor is executed, men are wont to fasten to the scaffold, or to burn in the fire, the instruments and tools with which he had assaulted or offended his Prince; in the same manner the bodies of the profane and impious varlets, of the traitors against God's divine majesty, ought to be treated ; they ought to be eternally punished with their souls in hell-fire, because they have been the unhappy instruments employed in affronting their Creator.

Thirdly, The body is not only the instrument employed by the wicked against God, but encourageth them, and hurries them on in sin. For its humours stir it up, inflame, and carry it to evil acts. For example, its sanguine constitution makes it luxurious, and inclinable to the filthy lusts of the flesh ; its choler hurries it to violent and furious actions ; its melancholy prompts it to the most horrid and hellish attempts. So that if such are to be punished who cause us to perform heinous deeds, as well as the actors, it belongs to God's justice to inflict upon the body, as well as upon the soul, eternal punishments.

Fourthly, " To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens," Eccl. iii. As the bodies of the wicked and reprobate have had their good things and satisfactions during this life, they must needs have also in another life their punishments and torments.

Fifthly, But, not to forget the reasons which have a relation to the faithful, and which are the pillars and supporters
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of our faith and hope ; we may say, that Jesus Christ is no less able to save us, than Adam was to destroy us. Now Adam having lost both soul and body, we must conclude, that it belongs to Christ to save them both. Therefore the body is to rise again, that it may partake of that salvation or redemption procured to us by this great Saviour:

Sixthly, " As we have borne the image of the first man, who was of the dust of the earth, we must also bear the image of the second man, who came from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. Now we bear not this image at present in this life ; we must therefore bear it in another.

Seventhly, God hath not made a covenant with part of man, but with all man, composed of soul and body. The body must therefore needs rise again, that it might partake of the eternal fruits of glory and happiness, which are promised to us by his divine covenant.

Eighthly, God is not only styled "the Father of spirits, and the God of the spirits of all flesh," Heb. xii. but he declares himself to be "the God of Abraham and of his posterity," Exod. iii. 6. He is not only the God of the soul, or the God of the body alone ; but he is the God of believing persons, of both their souls and bodies. From hence it necessarily follows, that the bodies of such as are deceased, are not utterly destroyed ; for God will raise them up again. With this argument Christ stopped the mouths of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection : " Concerning the resurrection of the dead, (said he) have you not read what God himself speaketh to you ? I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob : God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Ninthly, God hath adopted us to himself by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to make us the heirs

heirs of his kingdom, and co-heirs of his Son. From this passage we may gather a certain assurance of the resurrection; for when this Father of mercies shall see our bodies lying in the dust, out of his tenderness and compassion he will say, These are the bodies of my children, the members of mine only Son. It is not convenient to leave them always in that shameful state, in the bowels of the earth. That love that I bear to them cannot suffer it. Doubtless it was this consideration that caused the apostle to call the redemption of our bodies, Adoption; for by that he assures us, that he shall fetch out of their graves, the bodies of all them whom he hath adopted; and that our future resurrection is an effect, and a necessary consequence, of our adoption.

Tenthly, If we consider death in itself, as it is in its own nature, we shall find it to be the wages of sin, and a punishment of our crimes. Now Jesus Christ hath paid for us these wages, and satisfied for all our sins, abolishing them in his cross. We may therefore conclude, that death is to be destroyed in respect of believers, and that their bodies must needs rise again.

Eleventhly, St. Paul assures us that Jesus Christ "is the Saviour of his body." Now the mystical body of this great God and Redeemer consists not only in the infinite number of souls purchased with his blood, but also in the union of all bodies that have been the companions of these blessed souls. Therefore as he hath saved our souls from spiritual death and eternal damnation, he must also save our bodies from corporal death, and redeem them from the power of the grave.

Twelfthly, If death did for ever detain our bodies in the grave, we could not say, to speak properly, that our Saviour hath swallowed up death in victory, and that he hath destroyed the sepulchre; for, in such a case, death and the

grave would remain victorious, and triumph eternally over these miserable bodies.

Thirteenthly, Our Saviour hath suffered in his soul, and in his body; and by that means hath purchased to himself both our souls and bodies, according to St. Paul's excellent intimation, "You are bought with a price; glorify therefore God in your bodies, and in your souls, that belong unto God." From hence we must conclude, that this glorious Saviour would be deprived of part of that which he hath purchased by his inestimable sufferings, if our bodies always continued in the power of death.

Fourteenthly, The Holy Ghost hath sanctified our bodies, and made them his temples, as St. Paul teacheth us, "Know ye not, that you are the temples of God, and that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in you?" From hence the resurrection of our bodies must needs follow as a necessary consequence. For can we imagine, that God will suffer the temple of his holiness to continue for ever in its ruins and desolations? Will he not rear up again the noble pavilion of his glory, cast down by death?

Fifteenthly, God hath predestinated us to make us conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren. Now the soul and the body of this only-begotten of the Father, that were separated by death, have been joined again in his glorious resurrection, and received into heaven. Therefore our souls, that depart out of the world to enter into paradise, must return again to their bodies, that we may ascend up to heaven both in soul and body. All the difference that appears between Christ and us, is, that the precious body of our noble Captain could not be subject to corruption, but was raised again as soon as it fell, because of that strict and personal union between

his

his humanity and divinity; whereas the most part of all other bodies are corrupted, and reduced to ashes.

Sixteenthly, We have the same Holy Spirit, and divine virtue, dwelling in us, which was in our Lord Jesus Christ, the efficient cause of his resurrection; although not in the same measure and degree; therefore it will produce in us the same effect, and raise our bodies also from the dust. St. Paul makes use of this reason, in the viiith of the Romans, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, the that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Seventeenthly, The dead body that touched the bones of the prophet Elisha, revived again on a sudden. We have more cause to expect the resurrection of our bodies, because our bodies do not only touch Jesus Christ, dead and risen again; but we are become one body with him, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone. "I am" (said he) "the resurrection and the life; he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die; and he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," John xix. 25, 26.

Eighteenthly, God hath imprinted upon our bodies his own signet, and the marks of his love; he hath given them visible and palpable assurances of their future blessedness. Under the Old Testament, believers carried the seal of the covenant of God in their flesh; for circumcision was the seal of the righteousness obtained by faith and hope of the blessed immortality. They also are the flesh of the Paschal Lamb, which was a type of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Likewise, under the new covenant, God consecrates to himself our bodies by the water of baptisam, and by the bread and wine of the Lord's supper. So by this means he assures them of a joy-

ful and glorious resurrection. For if by eating of this bread, and drinking of this wine, we eat and drink spiritually the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, it is an infallible assurance, that this divine Saviour will raise us up again at the end of the world, as himself promiseth, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day," John vi. 54.

Nineteenthly, The body of a believer endures many assaults and evils for Christ's sake, and for his holy profession. It is often exposed to the most shameful and most cruel torments, and partakes in the same sufferings as he did on earth. Therefore it is just, that it should partake in his triumphs, glory, and eternal happiness. "It is a faithful saying; for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him. We always bear about in our bodies the dying of our Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh," 2 Tim. ii. 2 Cor. iv.

Twentiethly, There is nothing that God doth in vain; he never bestows upon us useless desires; therefore to what purpose hath he kindled in us such an earnest longing to see this wretched body out of the misery and corruption unto which sin hath subjected it, and in the fruition of glory and immortality? As St. Paul tells us in these words, "The creature was made subject to vanity; not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." He adds immediately after, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," Rom. viii.

Finally,

Finally, since whatsoever God hath appointed in his eternal counsel, must be fulfilled in time, and all things in the world attain to those ends for which he made them; and since he created our souls not to be idle, but to live in company and fellowship with the body; therefore this body, which falls down by death, must needs rise again at the resurrection, that the immortal soul might return to, and dwell with it, for ever.

THESE ARGUMENTS ARE QUOTED BY THE APOSTLE IN ROMANS 8:23.

To say that the resurrection of our bodies is impossible, is the greatest and most abominable atheism in the world. It is impudence to deny the infinite power of God, and the sacred history of the world's creation. For if things are in their beings as they are in workings, and if their operations are correspondent to their natures, we must of necessity conclude, that if there be a God of an infinite being, he must needs have a power answerable to his being; and by consequence, that this almighty God may without difficulty raise the dead.

If thou believest, that God calls the things that are not as if they were, wherefore dost thou not also believe, that this same God will also call the things that have been already, to restore them to that being which they have formerly enjoyed from his almighty hand? If thou believest, that God hath fashioned Eve out of one of her husband's ribs, that he made man of the dust, and created this dust out of nothing, canst thou not also believe, that God is able at the day of the resurrection to make again thy body of that dust into which it is reduced by death? If thou believest, that God hath breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, that he hath created thy soul, and infused it into thy body, where it was never before, how canst thou question his power of returning one day the same soul into the same body, where it formerly made its abode. In short, if thou believest, that the Holy Ghost, by moving upon the waters, hath caused so many beautiful and noble creatures to appear, and that he hath made

made light to shine out of darkness, must thou not think persuaded, that this same Holy Ghost can show his power amongst the graves, and fetch the body out of the dark that days of death, to introduce it into the light of the living?

Thou seest by experience, that every day a new house is built up of old materials; and dost thou wonder how the wise Architect, who hath built the great world by his word, does not can gather up the old pieces and materials of this little world, to make up a new building, adorned with divine graces and beauty? Shall the statue-maker be able to restore again his bruised image reduced to ashes? and shall not God be able to restore man, created after his own image and likeness, to his primitive state and being? In a word, let the difficulties seem never so great, remember, Christian, what the angel Gabriel told the blessed Virgin, "With God nothing shall be impossible." I know very well, that this is an old maxim of philosophy, "From privation of the habit there is no returning." That is to say, when once we are deprived of, and have lost a natural faculty, it is never to be recovered again. But the profane Atheists wrongfully abuse this maxim against the articles of our resurrection; for it is most true in respect of natural and secondary causes. It is not to be doubted, that when the faculties of nature are once lost, they are not to be restored by human art or skill; and when a man is dead, it is not possible for all the creatures to bring him to life again. But nothing is able to limit the power of an infinite agent. He that hath formed the wonderful eye, and in whom we live, move, and have our being, cannot he open the eye of a man born blind, and restore life to a dead corpse? This same philosopher, whereof the maxims are brought against the resurrection, declares openly, "That God can do all things that imply no contradiction." Now there is no contradiction in believing that God can render life to him that had lost it; and that what is fallen down by death,

shall be raised up to its former estate, and so it should.

should rise again by the resurrection. To the end that this resurrection of our bodies might seem less strange, God hath been pleased to give us in nature many images and resemblances. I am persuaded, believing souls, that you will not be displeased, if I mention here some of the chief.

First, As when the sun goeth down, and the earth is covered with the dark shadows of the night, man's declining, and the darkness of the grave is represented; likewise, when this king of the stars rises, when he brings with him the day over our heads, there is a beautiful and perfect image of the resurrection.

Secondly, When the moon parts with all its light and splendour which it borrows from the sun, when it covers itself with a veil of darkness, it is the image of death, and a representation of that veil which it draws over our eyes; but when the sun begins to look upon it again, and by that means it recovers its former brightness and glory, it discovers before our eyes, in a manner, that which shall happen to our bodies, when the Sun of Righteousness shall rise and cast upon them his favourable aspect.

Thirdly, The spring, summer, and autumn, follow one another, and the winter shews us an image of death. But when the sun begins to return again over our heads, when it covers the earth with a beautiful green, and revives the sleeping virtue of nature, it expresseth to us the resurrection in lively colours.

Fourthly, The trees that are in winter without flowers, fruits, or leaves, discover to us the hideous aspect of death, that strips man's body, and deprives him of all that is beautiful and pleasant to the eye. But when the same trees flourish again, and are loaded with fresh leaves and fruits, they put us in mind of the blessed resurrection of our bodies.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The seeds that corrupt and rot in the ground, represent our bodies rotting in the grave; but when the seeds appear above ground, and flourish, they express excellently well the blessed state of our bodies rising again to a new life, and recovering a perfect beauty. This similitude the Son of God himself recommends to us: "If a grain of wheat which falls to the earth does not die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit," John xii. And the apostle St. Paul insists at large upon this comparison; thereupon he exclaims against the stupid Atheists, who will not believe that a dead body can revive again, "O fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," 1 Cor. xv.

Sixthly, I find more wonderful what is said of certain herbs, which rise again out of their ashes; for example, if you burn mugwort, (in Latin, *artemisia*,) to ashes, and cast the ashes upon the earth, you shall see the same herb grow again. Many have tried and found this by experience. The same is reported of a kind of palm-tree; and because, in the Greek, a palm is called *Phoenix*, this experiment hath given occasion to the fable of the *Phoenix*, a bird that is said to revive again out of its own marrow and ashes. Who will offer to deny, that this is an excellent expression of the resurrection of our bodies?

Seventhly, There are also several sorts of insects that represent to us death and the resurrection. As the silk-worms; for when these small creatures have finished their work, and spun out that silk with which the garments and stately attire of kings and princes are made, they bury themselves in a tomb which they build; afterwards they become like a little bean, which hides under its thin skin the formation of a white butterfly. The same is observed of the caterpillars; for when they seem to be stark-dead, they creep out of their little sepulchres in the form of butterflies, of so many rare and various

colours that they deserve admiration ; so that many curious persons keep them in their closets among their rarities.

Eighthly, Amongst the beasts also, some seem to be dead for several months of the year, being without sense or motion ; but afterwards they awake again, or rather they begin a new life to move about as they did before.

Ninthly, But we need go no farther than ourselves to find the image of death, and of the resurrection. For is there any thing that can express death more perfectly than our dead sleep, that stupifies the senses, puts a stop to the spirits of our bodies, and binds up our most active faculties ? So that we have then eyes without seeing, ears without hearing, a nose and cannot smell, and a living body, but we have no feeling. But as soon as such a person comes to awaken again, to open his eyes, and to stir and act, he represents a most perfect image of the resurrection.

I might also add, amongst the images of death and the resurrection, the several changes and alterations that happen to the states and empires of the world. For oft-times they appear as dead and buried ; but afterwards they rise again from their falls, and march out of their obscurity, as in a glorious resurrection. But I shall wave these similitudes, and consider only such as the *church* of God, in several ages, hath recommended to us as types of the future resurrection of our bodies.

First, Noah and his family (in which all the church of God at that time was comprehended) remained in the ark as in a floating coffin, during the space of one hundred and fifty days. But, after the deluge, God caused them to march out of that ark. In the same manner, after our bodies shall have been in their graves so many years or ages, as God has ap-

pointed in his wonderful wisdom, he will draw them out again by his infinite power, and will say to us all, "Come forth, and appear to judgment."

Secondly, The people of Israel went down into Egypt, and dwelt there 100 years or thereabouts, as in a kind of sepulchre; but God delivered them at last, and caused them to go up to the land of Canaan, as by a blessed resurrection.

Thirdly, The Red Sea, into which the people went down, and in which Pharaoh with all his host was drowned, is an image of our grave; and the great power of God discovered, to make this people pass through that dreadful sea, and to go up out of its depths as by a miracle, shews to the blindest understandings, that omnipotence which God will one day manifest in drawing his people out of the depths of death, that we may be able to sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

Fourthly, When the ark of God's covenant was taken captive by the Philistines, and shut up in the house of Dagon, it was a type of those bodies which God hath chosen for his ark, and which are to remain for a time in Satan's prison, under the command of Death. But when the Philistines sent back again this ark, and that the children of Israel received it with outward expressions of great joy, it is a plain description of that which shall happen when God shall oblige Death to open all its prisons, and release all its prisoners; a description, I say, of the wonderful joy of the inhabitants of the celestial Canaan.

Fifthly, Babylon also, where the church of Israel remained captive threescore and ten years, is a symbolical representation of the grave, where these miserable bodies are to continue in captivity. Therefore in allusion, the prophet styles it a lake without water; but the deliverance of Israel from the
Babylonish

Babylonish captivity, is a type of our glorious resurrection: For that reason the holy man of God speaks of it in such terms as have respect to the resurrection of our bodies from the grave.

Sixthly, Solomon's temple, that was demolished and pulled down by Nebuchadnezzar, and that lay many years in a desolate condition, is another type of the bodies of believers destroyed by the devil, and remaining for a time in the dust. But when the Jews were returned from Babylon, they reared up the walls of this temple, and built it again. This represents the resurrection of our bodies, the temple of our living God. Our Saviour had an eye to this allusion, when he told the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and I will build it up again in three days." For his beloved disciple adds immediately after, that he spoke of the temple of his body.

Seventhly, You may find the types and images of the same thing in many of the faithful, in Joseph, Daniel, and Jonas. For as the prisons of Egypt, the lions' den, and the whale's belly, represent the graves; likewise, when Darus caused Daniel to be taken out of the den, and when God ordered the whale to cast up Jonas upon the dry ground, the resurrection is thereby described.

Eighthly, But there is no passage, type, nor figure, more plain in the Old Testament, concerning the resurrection, than that of the xxxviiith of Ezekiel. For that the children of Israel might understand the greatness of God's power, able to free them from the Babylonish captivity, he caused the resurrection of the dead to appear before his prophet. He carried him away into a large field, covered all over with dead and dry bones. At God's command these bones drew near to one another, and began to be joined; afterwards the sinews appeared, the flesh covered them, and the skin was stretched over them: then a breath came from the four winds

upon

upon these dead bodies, entered into them, and they rose up alive upon their feet, so that they seemed as a great army.

But God hath not only represented the resurrection by many illustrious and excellent types, but he hath also expressly foretold it by the holy prophets. Isaiah speaks of this mystery in an excellent manner : "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they rise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," Isa. xxvi. And there can be nothing plainer than the prophecy of the prophet Daniel, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii.

Therefore, in hopes of the resurrection, the patriarchs were very careful of their tombs. Abraham, the father of the faithful, had no inheritance in the land of Canaan, and yet he was very desirous to buy for himself and family a burying-place. When Jacob lay upon his death-bed, he commanded his son Joseph, "Deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place," Gen. xlvii. And when Joseph was ready to yield up his soul unto God, he told his brethren, "That God would surely visit them; and that they should carry his bones from thence," Gen. l.

All the faithful of the Old Testament have publicly declared their expectation of this blessed resurrection from the dead, as it may appear by that notable passage of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another's."

Job

Job xix. As may also appear by the magnificent words of David, "I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," *Psa. xvii.*

Those blessed martyrs, mentioned in the book of *Macca-*
bees, were so well persuaded of this doctrine, that they had the courage willingly to offer their bodies to death and torments the most dreadful. You may hear one speaking boldly to king Antiochus, that most cruel tyrant, who would have forced him to break the law of God, "Thou murderer, thou deprivest us of life; but the King of the world shall raise us up at the resurrection to an eternal life, since we die for his laws." Another, animated with an holy zeal and an heroic spirit, delivers his tongue and hands to be cut off with this saying, "I have received these things from heaven; but I now despise them for the laws of my God; for I hope he will restore them to me again." A third, alighting the tyrant's threats and promises, uttered this excellent saying, "It is better for me to leave the expectations of men, to look for what God promises, that I may again rise by his power." But nothing appears more admirable than the mother of those illustrious children: when speaking to the seventh, the youngest of all, she uses this language, "I know not how you were formed in my womb; for I never gave you a spirit, nor life, nor gathered together your limbs into a body; but the Creator of the world, the Author of nature, who by his power and goodness has formed the beginning of all things, he will of his mercy restore to you again your spirit and life, because you now value not yourselves for the sake of his laws."

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was well acquainted with this mystery, as is to be proved by what she told our Saviour Christ, "I know that my brother shall rise again at the resurrection at the last day." And the Pharisees maintained the belief of the resurrection from the dead against the Sad-

duces,

decees, who denied the resurrection and immortality of the soul. Therefore when St. Paul was to answer for himself before the Jews' tribunal, where half were Pharisees, and half were Sadducees, he made this profession, "I am a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee; for the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." And when he made his apology before Felix the governor, he spoke in this manner: "This I confess unto thee, that, after the way which they call heresy, I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust."

As the Jews of our time have forsaken God, God hath also forsaken and given them over to a reprobate sense; for as they set aside the infinite merits of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, they vainly persuade themselves, that their sins are sufficiently expiated by their own deaths; notwithstanding the grievous corruptions that are to be found in their doctrines, they depart out of this life in hopes of rising again one day. For that reason they are careful in washing their dead bodies, in burying them with honour and decency; and when they have thus laid them in their graves, they bow themselves three times towards the earth, and cast behind them grass newly plucked up from the ground. By which ceremony they would have us understand, that corpse which they lay in the earth shall one day rise again, and push forth; according to the prophet's expression, "Your bones shall grow as the grass."

But this article of the resurrection of our bodies, which is found in some few passages of the Old Testament, is to be seen almost in every page of the New; and the texts concerning this truth are so plain and express, that it is not possible

sible to reject this wholesome doctrine, but we must at the same time abjure the Christian religion, and give the lie to the Holy Ghost.

That our faith might be the better settled, God has been pleased not only to publish the resurrection from the dead by his prophets and apostles; he hath not only discovered to us many excellent and delightful types and figures of this truth: but to give us a more experimental testimony of his power, he hath raised several from the dead. In the Old Testament, God raised up two children, one at the prayers of the prophet Elijah, the other at the request of Elisha, his successor, 1 Kings xvii. And when the dead body had been laid in Elisha's grave, and touched his bones, it returned to life again, 2 Kings xiii. And, during our Saviour's abode on earth, he raised to life the daughter of Jairus that was dead; the widow's son of Nain, who was carried out of the gate to be buried; and Lazarus, who had been four days lying in his grave, whose body began to stink, Matt. ix. Luke vii. When this merciful Saviour gave up the ghost upon the cross, the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept awoke, and came out of the graves, after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many, Matt. xxvii. After his ascension he raised from the dead Dorcas, a charitable widow, at the prayers of St. Peter, to comfort the poor widows that wept for her; and a young man, named Eutychus, was restored to life by the means of St. Paul, that the congregation of believers might be comforted, who were troubled at his unexpected fall and sudden death.

But chiefly we have the example of our Lord, who hath raised himself up by a divine power: This glorious instance is able not only to excite our admiration, but also to settle our faith, and nourish our hopes. For the resurrection of other persons shews what God can do, but the resurrection of Christ declares

declares to us what God will do, and is an earnest to assure us of our future resurrection. It is not possible to believe, as we ought, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; but we must also, by a necessary consequence, believe that he will raise us likewise. This St. Paul endeavours to teach us, "If we believe that Jesus Christ is dead and risen; even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him," 1 Thes. iv. As the head is, so shall the members be. As the first-fruits are, so shall the rest of the harvest be. The same apostle labours to persuade this truth in these excellent words, "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept; for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming."

Against this holy and divine doctrine, some object, That there are bodies consumed by fire, and burnt to ashes. But what follows from hence? for, whether the bodies be reduced to dust or ashes, it matters not; God is able to restore them, and render to them their primitive forms. Since certain herbs, consumed to ashes, rise again out of the ground by a natural inclination, as we have already observed; and since art is so industrious to make them transparent bodies (of an extraordinary beauty) of melted ashes; shall not God, who is so infinitely above all abilities of nature created by him, and of all arts and sciences which proceed from his direction, be able of ashes to compose a beautiful and perfect body?

Others pretend next, That a great many bodies have been drowned in the seas, and swallowed up in the waters.—I acknowledge that to be true. But I affirm, that God is altogether as able to draw a body out of the depth of the sea, as out of the bowels of the earth. He who hath prescribed

bounds to this great sea, who dives up its vast concavities, and lays open its immense bottom, hath not he a command over this sea? Can not he oblige it to restore those bodies that have been committed to its keeping, as when he commanded the whale to bring again to land the prophet Jonas, whom it had swallowed up alive? and to restore to the world the souls of those who had been devoured by the great deep?

Some object, That there are bodies devoured by the beasts, which have been their food, and have been turned into their substance.—But this objection is not to be valued; for when a human body shall have passed through the bowels of the beasts, and been changed a thousand and a thousand times into their substance, there is nothing that can hinder God from restoring them again at the day of the resurrection. But those animals shall never rise again; 'tis therefore not thing to the purpose to inquire after them, when the body shall re-assume that which they shall have devoured, and carried into their own substance. The strongest and most plausible objection concerns the Anthropophagi: (the eaters of men.) For 'tis very well known, that in the Indies there are some savages so barbarous as to feed upon human flesh, and to esteem it as their greatest dainties. Some answer to this, That such kind of inhumanities are not ordinary; and that such wretched Indians never practise such heinous things but in urgent necessity, or when they purpose to revenge themselves upon their enemies. But such as have given an account of the new-found America, relate, That in some provinces there have been such cruel and inhuman savages, as not only devour the flesh of their enemies, whom they sacrificed to their idols, but also of their dearest friends, whom they cut in pieces in their shamblers. The same historians tell us, That some of the barbarous people are so impiously mistaken, as to reckon it an act of piety and duty to their parents and friends, to give them a sepulchre in their own stomachs. Again, they say, That there are some who,

like so many mad dogs, feed upon infants, and hunt after men as we do after wild beasts in the field.—In case all these relations should be true, I must desire my reader to take notice, there are two kinds of parts that compose the human body, the one solid, as the bones and nerves, and so essential to it, that without them it would cease from being any longer an human body; the other parts are adventitious, accidental, and changeable; they serve to maintain it almost as the food and nourishment. Now this I affirm, as an undoubted truth, that when it happens that men feed upon their own kind, God takes care, by his wonderful providence, that the essential and solid parts of the man devoured never enter into the substance or composition of the solid parts of the devourer. At the great day of the resurrection, the bodies will re-assume all their essential and solid parts, without which they cannot be true bodies; but they shall not need the accidental and fluid parts, as are the humours and blood; for then they shall have no more inward heat to consume them, and no more hunger and thirst. Therefore they shall never have any need of meat or drink, or of any other things whatsoever, to serve them instead of nourishment. Let the metals be never so much mingled, the goldsmith separates them with ease. Thus, let our human bodies be never so much altered and shuffled together, God will be able enough to separate and distinguish the one from another. When the goldsmith will separate the metals, he casts them into the melting-pot, and causeth them to pass through the fire; but God, who can do all things without means, hath no need of the fire, or the melting-pot; for by his word, at the twinkling of an eye, he can cause this separation to be made; and render to every body that which necessarily belongs to its composition. In a word, if the difficulty should be far greater than it is, and if the resolution of this objection were not so easy to be made, it should not lessen our faith, or cause us to doubt of the resurrection of our bodies.

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When it concerns things that the holy scripture doth not expressly declare and decide, or that cannot be drawn from it by necessary consequence, it is lawful to dispute either for or against such things; but if it concerns such as this sacred writ, inspired of God, plainly set forth, our faith must learn her duty, to submit to Almighty God, and believe that there is nothing impossible with him. Now this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is so expressly and plainly found in this holy scripture, that it seems as visible as the beams of the noon sun. Many questions are made upon this subject; some are of that importance, that an answer will give satisfaction upon this excellent subject. First, They inquire by whom, and by whose power, shall the resurrection be effected? The scripture gives an occasion to make this inquiry; for it ascribes it sometimes to the Father, as in John v. "The Father raises the dead, and quickens them;" sometimes to the Son, as in Phil. iii. "Jesus Christ shall change our vile bodies, according to his mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself;" and sometimes to the Holy Ghost, as in Rom. viii. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that hath raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." This difficulty may be thus resolved; all the outward works of God, that concern the creatures, are common to the three Persons of the most holy, most glorious, and most wonderful TRINITY.

So that we shall rise again by the infinite power of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, the resurrection is especially ascribed to the Son, as he is the Judge of the quick and the dead. In order to the discharge of that glorious employment, all power hath been committed to him in heaven, and in the earth, and in the seas.

2. Some inquire farther, When shall this resurrection be?

8

Answer,

I answer, that it shall be in the day in which God hath appointed to judge all the world; by the man whom he hath ordained, Acts xviii. You are not to expect from me, Christians, that I should point out to you precisely the day when this shall come to pass; for it belongs not to us to know the times and the seasons, which God hath reserved to himself. 'Tis true; we may see, that most part of the prophecies are already fulfilled; so that we may say in general terms, "The Lord is at hand, and our salvation is nearer than when we believed," Phil. iv. Rom. xiii.

Nevertheless, I cannot undertake to mark out unto you this glorious day, nor to tell you the year nor age when it shall be. There is no man upon earth, nor angel in heaven, that is able to speak of it with certainty. Therefore Jesus Christ himself informs us, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," Matt. xxiv. If our Saviour saith more, "That the Son himself knoweth not the day," Mark xiii. we must understand this as he is a man, and during his abode in the world; for, as he is God, he knoweth all things from all eternity. And now that he is glorified, as he is a man, he understands all things. But he hath hid from men the time of his coming, that we might expect him at every moment. As he tells the holy apostles, "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come; but know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up," Matt. xxv. He writes in the same language to the angel of the church of Sardis, "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent; if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." The first Christians were very well acquainted with this wholesome doctrine, as we may judge by this passage of St. Paul to the Thessa-

Thessalonians: "But of the times and of the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape," 1. Thessa. v. As the days of Noah were, so shall be the coming of the Son of man, For as they were before the deluge, eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and were not sensible of the deluge, until it was come, and carried them all away; so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man, Matt. xxv.

The wise man tells us, "That hope delayed causeth the heart to languish," Prov. xiii. But we must except the hope and expectation of the resurrection; for though this blessed resurrection shall not come to pass yet many thousand ages, it should not cause such as die in the Lord to languish. For while their bodies are in their graves, they suffer nothing; and as they are there without sense, they cannot be impatient; no more than a man that is in a deep sleep. For the soul enjoys in the contemplation of God's face such unspeakable satisfactions, that it is not capable of grief, sorrow, displeasure, or the least disturbance. St. Peter tells us, "That a thousand years with God are but as a day," 2 Pet. iii. We may say the same of those who were admitted to God's glorious presence to behold his face; for a thousand years in such an happy state, appear less than one day in this miserable condition. Hundreds and thousands of years pass away far quicker to the blessed inhabitants of heaven, than the moments to such as live in troubles upon earth.

5. Others desire to know where this resurrection shall happen. The Jewish whimsies and extravagancies have given occasion to this question; for they think, that the dead bodies rise in no other place but the Holy Land. Therefore they

they have made another childish fable, That the bodies of all their nation, that die in several parts of the world, shall go through earthly vaults, and roll through the secret contrivances of this globe, until they come to the land of Canaan, where they are to arise from the dead. And on one or other occasions another, they say further, That they shall feel more or less pain in their passage, according to the goodness or sin of their lives. I need not spend any time in the refutation of this foolish and impertinent opinion; but it may justly cause us to acknowledge the just judgment of God upon this unhappy people, who have refused, with a devilish obstinacy, the great Saviour of the world. For, because they have not received the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God hath sent them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie, and hath given them over to a reprobate mind: 2 Thess. ii. For us Christians, we say, That, without any much ado, where the body is at the last day, there it shall rise from its grave.

4. The next question is, What shall rise from the dead?—The answer, That the same body which falls by death, shall rise again at the general resurrection. If God should make a new body to join it to our souls, it would be no more a resurrection, but rather a new creation; neither shall we only take such a body as our own; for things that are only alike, are not the same, let them be never so much alike; but we shall take again the same body, which our souls animate during its abode here below; and if I may make use of the expressions and terms of divines, it shall not only be the same body, but also the same individual. As in the first resurrection, God creates not a new soul, but he regenerates and sanctifies that which was dead in its trespasses and sins; thus, in the second resurrection, God makes not another body, but he only bestows another life upon that which was lying in corruption, and amongst the dead. As when our Saviour rose from

from the dead, he made not for himself a new body, but he took again that same which had been formed in the womb of the blessed Virgin; likewise, in the general resurrection, he will not create for us new bodies, but he will restore to us that same which we had from our mothers' wombs. This argument is not to be answered; for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the efficient or meritorious cause of ours, but also the pattern and model, or, as the schoolmen tell us, it is the exemplary cause of our future resurrection. But there is no need of arguments, when the word of God is so clear and express on this subject. St. Paul informs us, "That the Lord shall change our vile body; that this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality," Phil. iii. 1 Cor. xv. "And that the life of Jesus shall be made manifest in our mortal flesh," 2 Cor. iv. And the holy Job saith, ch. xix. "not only that he shall see God, but that he shall see God in his flesh, and that he shall see him with his eyes." For the same reason, in some ancient copies, in our Apostles' Creed, as in the Creed of Aquila, I find not only, "I believe the resurrection of the flesh," but, "I believe the resurrection of *this* flesh."

5. Some ask, Whether the bodies of the wicked shall rise from the dead, as well as the bodies of the righteous?—The Jews, who delight in whimsical inventions, fancy a resurrection only for the just, in which unbelievers and reprobates have no share. To strengthen this dream, they abuse the words of the first Psalm, "The wicked shall not stand in judgment; nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." Finally, They are so much besotted with an high conceit of themselves, that none are righteous but of their own nation; that none are pleasing to God, or ought to rise again from the dead, but the Israelites. But we Christians are brought up and instructed in better doctrines; we believe, without hesitation, that all men that are dead since the beginning of the world,

world, of every people and nation under heaven, shall rise again at the day of judgment. For St. Paul assures us, "That there shall be a resurrection of the just, and of the unjust." David, in his first psalm, speaks nothing against this truth, which is as clear as the sun, and as infallible as the heavens and the earth; for he saith not, the wicked shall not rise again, but only, that they shall not stand before God in judgment; that is to say, that they shall not subsist before the tribunal of God's justice, nor be able to abide the fiery presence of God, angry and displeased for their impieties. But this we may observe, that although God will raise up all the men of the world, without exception, from their graves, there shall be a notable difference between them; for he will raise the wicked up, and draw them out of their graves, as a judge drags an offender out of his dungeon, to sentence him to death. But he will raise again believers as their Redeemer, that their bodies, as well as their souls, might enjoy the blessed fruits of the redemption purchased for us. Therefore this divine Saviour styles them *children of the resurrection*; for none but they shall inherit his blessing, and partake of his eternal glory.

G. Some inquire further, In what manner shall this resurrection be?—I answer, That our Lord and Saviour shall come down from heaven, clothed with light and glory, and attended upon by the angels of his power, and millions of his saints. He shall be preceded by the cry of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, for the trumpet shall sound: and as at the sounding of the silver trumpet that proclaimed the Jews' jubilee all the prisons were opened, and the prisoners set at liberty; in the same manner, at the sound of the last trumpet, all the prisons of death shall be broke open, and the bodies that were imprisoned shall go out: to speak in the language of the Holy Ghost, "the sea shall give up her dead, and death and hell shall restore the dead that are in them." And as Lazarus rose up as soon as Jesus Christ had called to him
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in his tomb, "Lazarus, come out;" likewise when the voice of this great God and Saviour shall sound in our tombs, at that moment we shall rise again, and appear before him. For the hour cometh, that such as are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

7. The next question is, In what stature of body shall we rise?—Some are persuaded that we shall rise in the same stature that we die. This they gather from St. John's description of the last judgment, "I saw the living and the dead, the great and the small, stand before God." Others think, that all the elect shall rise again in perfect stature, and shall be like to our Saviour Christ; which they endeavour to prove by St. Paul's words, "We shall meet in a perfect man, to the measure of the perfect stature of Christ."

When it concerns things that relate to our salvation, it is a respectful ignorance to refuse to pry into those things which God hath concealed, or not thought proper to reveal. Therefore, as the holy writ is silent concerning this, we cannot speak of it with too much sobriety. I dare not affirm, that we shall rise again in the same stature; I confess, that this opinion, That all the saints shall have a stature like to our Saviour Christ, and that they shall bear the image and likeness in that respect in their bodies, contains nothing contrary to piety. But I dare say, that this cannot be proved by the words of St. Paul; for the sequel of his discourse shews most evidently, that he intends not the stature of the body, but that of the soul, which consists in knowledge and holiness.

That opinion which appears to be most likely, and most conformable to the analogy of faith, is, that the elect shall rise again in perfect stature. For the beauty and perfection of the stature contributes much to the glory and majesty of the body, without which man cannot be said to be most per-

fectly happy. Besides, this perfection is agreeable to that command and dominion, which God shall give to the saints, over the creatures, after the resurrection. If those who die in their childhood rise again in the same stature; if those who depart in their old and decrepit age come out of their graves with their feeble and infirm bodies; how could either of them be fit for that glory and perfection where nothing shall be amiss or wanting? As the Promised Land was the type of the Celestial Canaan, it is not without good cause that the scripture takes notice, that there was none of those that went over Jordan into the Holy Land that was old and decrepit, unless it were Joshua or Caleb; none of the rest were threescore years old. I may also apply to the Jerusalem above, that which the prophet saith of the Jerusalem here below, the type and figure of the celestial: "From henceforth there shall not be any child of a few days old, nor any ancient person who fulfilleth not his days."

Finally, As God created Adam and Eve in a perfect stature, to settle them in the terrestrial paradise, it is my opinion, that he will also raise up all the faithful in a perfect stature, to introduce them into the celestial paradise. In this life the body of a child is many years before it can attain to the stature of a perfect man; but at the great day of the resurrection, God will grant it to him in a moment.

That which is spoken of in Rev. xx. is not contrary to this doctrine; for when the Holy Ghost saith, that "the dead, small and great, shall stand before God," that relates not to the stature or bigness of body, but to the state and condition of the person; that is to say, the kings and princes shall appear to judgment, as well as the vilest and most contemptible subjects, and the most wretched slaves. Therefore these former words are designed to express nothing more than what St. Paul saith, "That we must all appear before the judgment"

judgment seat of Christ, that we might receive in our bodies according as we have done, whether it be good or evil."

8. Some are ready to ask, What manner of bodies shall the reprobates have after the resurrection?—I have no mind to speak any thing of myself; otherwise I should answer, That in consideration of the fury of hell-fire, the smoke of the bottomless pit, and the violence of the excessive torments which they shall suffer, they shall appear most deformed, ugly, ill-favoured, and dreadful to look upon. I should say, that there shall appear in their guilty looks and frightened countenances, the devil's image, and that of the hellish furies. But it will be sufficient to reply, That the bodies of the wicked shall be immortal, and their immortality shall be most miserable; that it had been far better for them to have never been, or to have been as the beasts, that die without any hope of living again; for they shall live to die eternally, and they shall die, but never consume away. It shall not be possible to add any thing to their most violent tortures, for they shall be inexpressible; nor to the continuance of their sufferings, for they shall be eternal. Therefore, as we have already taken notice, they shall seek death, that is, they shall desire to be reduced to nothing; but death shall fly away from them, and give them over to a worm that shall never die, and to a fire that shall never be quenched. O miserable bodies! O wretched souls! whom God shall cast into the midst of hell's fiercest flames, and against whom the devils shall let fly all their arrows, discharge all their fury, and kindle all their fires, and whom they will take pleasure to torment for ever and ever.

9. Some inquire, What manner of bodies the children of God, and the members of Christ, shall have, after they are risen from the dead?—I answer, That their substance shall be the same which they had before death; they shall not be imaginary or false appearances, but true human bodies, made

up of flesh and bones ; for we may say of all the bodies of the faithful, as of that of our Saviour Christ, that the resurrection will procure to them a considerable glory which they never had before, but it shall not destroy their nature and manhood. They shall be able to speak in the language of our Redeemer, "Feel and see ; a spirit hath neither flesh nor bones, as ye see that I have." As our soul shall lose nothing of its being, only it shall be perfectly cleansed from all sin and corruption, and sanctified in such a manner, that it will not be possible for it to entertain any vicious inclination ; likewise there shall be no alteration in the essential parts of our bodies ; but there shall be a wonderful change in regard of the qualities ; for they shall cast off all corruption and mortality, and shall never be subject to sickness, pain, nor to the inconveniences that disturb it during this life. And if they have now any imperfection, they shall be perfectly freed : so that we may justly say of the celestial Jerusalem, that in it no blind nor lame shall be suffered to enter ; for all the bodies of the saints shall be perfect and beautiful, that the least spot or blemish shall not be seen in them, 1 Sam. vi.

I know that Jesus Christ tells us in his gospel, Mat. v. "If thy right eye offend thee, pull it out, and cast it from thee ; for it is better that one of thy members perish, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell : and if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee ; for it is better that thou shouldest enter into life lame or maimed, than to have two feet and two hands, and to be cast into hell-fire," Mark iv. But these words are figurative ; by them our Saviour would teach us, that for his sake and glory we must deny our dearest affections, and our most importunate lusts. And if these words should be taken in their literal sense, we must understand a supposition—if it were possible to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, lame, or maimed, it would be far better to be admitted to that blessed
state,

state, than to have a perfect and a whole body, and to be cast into the torments of hell. From thence we cannot infer, that the faithful are to rise from their graves with imperfect and deficient bodies; for that is repugnant to an accomplished happiness. Since sin shall be utterly abolished and destroyed, the punishment of sin shall continue no longer.

There are, nevertheless, some who believe, with several ancient doctors of the primitive church, that the holy martyrs shall bear about them the scars and other marks of their sufferings for the name of Jesus, in the same manner as their glorious Saviour, after his resurrection, could shew the print of the nails that had fastened his feet and hands to the cross, and in his side the hole that the spear had made. They esteemed such marks glorious and honourable scars; so that, according to their judgment, the martyrs shall be like to the generous and noble-hearted soldiers, who have received wounds in the service of their Prince; which they bear about as undoubted expressions of their courage. I shall not altogether contradict this opinion; for it is not contrary to the analogy of faith. But I dare not affirm it as a certain truth; for we cannot learn this from the holy scriptures, that represent these blessed martyrs clothed with long robes, washed and whitened in the blood of the Lamb, without making any mention of their former sufferings. Our Saviour was pleased to preserve the marks of his sufferings, that he might convince St. Thomas of his unbelief, and that he may one day discover and shew them to those that have pierced him through. But, from this instance, I cannot see how we can conclude any thing to the purpose. We may safely say, either that the martyrs shall have no such scars, or, if they have, they shall bring no deformity to their bodies, nor shall they deprive us of any member or part required in us to make us perfect. If it should be otherwise, we could not be entirely and perfectly happy. After the resurrection, the bodies of God's
children

and be full of glory; they shall not only have some superficial splendour upon their countenance or skin, as Moses, when he had been with God forty days and forty nights, in the holy mountain; but they shall shine within and without, as a true diamond, that casts abroad on all sides its light and flames. So that it shall happen to them, as it happened to our Saviour upon Mount Tabor; for it is said, that his garments became white as the light. In the same manner, at the time of our transfiguration, our bodies, that are but garments of our immortal souls, shall be as clear as the light, and as bright as the celestial globes. I speak here nothing but what the prophet Daniel said before me, Dan. xii. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And our Saviour assures us, Matt. xxiii. "The children of God shall shine in the kingdom of their Father as the sun."

These glorified bodies shall never corrupt nor putrefy, but they shall be for ever incorruptible. Therefore St. Paul assures us, "that this corruptible must put on incorruption." So that I may safely affirm, that their glory shall be more durable than that of the sun, or of the moon, or of the stars. For though these celestial bodies never corrupt, out of any inward principle; though there can no alteration happen to them, neither from their essential form, nor from the properties that issue from it, nor from any other inherent quality; they shall nevertheless corrupt out of an external principle: for the almighty hand of God which made them shall change and alter them, as the royal prophet tells us, in Psalm cii. "The heavens shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed." 2 Pet. iii. "The heavens (said he) shall pass away with a great noise." Whereas the glorified bodies shall never corrupt, neither by any internal principles, nor by their essential form, nor by the properties

perities and accidents that flow from it, nor by any external cause, or by any accident whatsoever, that can be imagined ; for the almighty hand of God shall make them, never to mar them again. From thence it follows, that they shall die no more, but shall continue immortal ; for with incorruption they must put on immortality. Therefore, when our Saviour speaks of the state of the glorified saints, Luke xx. he saith not only " that they shall not die ; but, they cannot die any more, because they shall be like the angels, being the children of the resurrection." In this consists the difference between them and those whom God hath raised up, already mentioned in the Old and New Testament. For they were forced to return to their sensual life, to eat and drink, and therefore they were again subject to corruption and death. But at the day of the general resurrection, " whatsoever is mortal shall be swallowed up by life ;" therefore St. Paul applies to this glorious day the accomplishment of this prophecy, " Death is swallowed up in victory." And he brings in these persons who shall be clothed with this immortal glory, braving death and the grave, in this triumphing language, " O death, where is thy sting ! O grave, where is thy victory !"

In short, to make us sensible that our bodies shall put on the richest and most noble qualities that can be imagined, and to express all in a word, the Holy Ghost assures us, that they shall bear the image of the Son of God, and be made conformable to his glorious body. St. Paul declares this truth, 1 Cor. xv. " The first man, (saith he) was of the earth, earthy ; the second Man was the Lord from heaven : as is the earthy, such are they that are earthy ; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly ; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And in Phil. iii. he saith, " We wait for the Lord Jesus from heaven, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like to his glorious body." From hence you may understand,

Christians, that at the rebuilding of this little temple of the Godhead, there shall happen no such things as at the rearing up of the temple at Jerusalem; for when that was rebuilding, at the return from the Babylonish captivity, they who had seen the former temple, and its wonderful glory, wept aloud, and their weeping interrupted the others' expressions of joy and gladness. At the restoration of the temple of our bodies, nothing will be heard but songs of triumph and jubilee. Such as have seen with the eyes of faith man's body as it was in the state of its integrity, in the earthly paradise, shall not be then sorry, that it hath been defaced by sin, and destroyed by death. They shall not be sorry for any thing that is passed; they shall not be able to wish for any increase of happiness and glory for the future: for at the very instant of its rising from the grave, it shall be raised to its highest splendour, happiness, and magnificence; so that it shall be truly said, "That the glory of this second house shall be greater than that of the first," Hag. ii.

Now that we have treated sufficiently of such as shall rise from their graves, it remains that we take a view of those whose bodies shall never be laid in the dust, and who shall be alive at Christ's coming down from heaven. For that purpose St. Paul informs us, 1 Cor. xv. "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet. And he speaks in this manner to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. iv. "For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of our Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and we shall ever be with
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the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words." I know very well, that St. Paul tells the Hebrews, "that it is appointed unto all men once to die;" therefore I conceive that this great change that shall be made in the bodies of them that shall be then alive, shall be a kind of death; for Christ will destroy and abolish altogether, in them, all corruption and inclination to mortality. And when he shall change the bodies of the reprobates, he will make them like to the other reprobates, whom he shall fetch out of their graves. He will make them immortal, that they may be eternally tormented in hell. But he will cause the bodies of believers then alive to be like the other believers, that they may all partake and enjoy the same glory and eternal bliss.

Christians, in what condition soever you be, seriously apply to yourselves these divine consolations. You that are grieved to see your bodies maimed and deprived of one of your members, your eyes, hearing, or some other of your senses, whether you be so born, or whether such a privation hath happened to you by a disease, by a mischance, or by any other accident, rejoice and comfort yourselves with this assurance, that you shall see one day this wretched body restored to a perfect state, to a perfection that shall never be lost. You who fret and vex yourselves, to behold how old age and sickness have disfigured your bodies, what breaches and ruins they have caused in you, comfort yourselves in expectation of this glorious resurrection, which shall supply this decayed and languishing body with new strength and vigour, and adorn it with a perfect beauty and an eternal glory.

And you, whom death undermines, and intends shortly to lay in the dust, grieve not at it; for what you lose at present, you shall find again at the great day of the resurrection. When Joseph died, he commanded his brethren concerning his bones, that they should carry them out of Egypt into the

land of Canaan. Now our bones are the bones of Jesus Christ, our true Joseph. Therefore he will command his angels to gather them up safe, he himself will have a care to preserve them; at the great morn of the resurrection, he shall fetch them out of their graves, as out of an Egypt, out of an house of bondage, and will carry them to his celestial Canaan. When the tabernacle was taken to pieces, the high-priest delivered every piece in charge to the Levites, so that when they were to set it up again, there was nothing wanting; likewise our Saviour hath given in charge, and delivered by retail to our tombs, every member and part of our bodies, these tabernacles which he hath sanctified for himself. Therefore they shall all be found again at the resurrection, without the least diminution. These tabernacles shall not only be found entire, but they shall be beautified with a far greater glory and splendour than before.

There is none but would be glad to lay himself down to sleep in his bed, and pull off his garments willingly, if he were certain to be more healthy, and to find his garments fresher and more beautiful in the morning; if he were persuaded, that, instead of old rags, he were to put on a royal attire, and most magnificent garments, who would not willingly go out of a pitiful cabin, and forsake a miserable lodge, which shall be one day changed into a golden palace adorned with precious stones? Comfort thyself, believing soul, and rejoice in God thy Redeemer; cast off willingly this garment that is so incommodious and troublesome to thee. Forsake this wretched body, undermined by sickness and diseases, and consumed by time. Sleep quietly in the Lord Jesus, and repose thyself in his bosom; for when thou shalt wake again at the sound of the archangel's trumpet, thou shalt find this garment whiter than snow, and as bright as the light. Grieve not to see this miserable dwelling fall to pieces and rot; for God shall build it up again with his own hands, and convert it

it into his own temple, and a pavilion of his glory. Thou mayest be said shortly to return again, and to find this woeful lodge of earth become an heavenly palace, purer than fine gold, and brighter than diamonds, rubies, and all precious stones. Weep not for thy beautiful eyes that are shut, nor for the rest of thy senses that are lost, or for the members of thy body that consume away one after another. For with these same eyes that have lost, or shall shortly lose, the sight of the day, thou shalt behold a divine light, thou shalt shine eternal in heaven; thou shalt behold the face of the King of kings, and all the glory and magnificence of his kingdom. With these ears that are almost deaf, and that shall be shortly stopped, thou shalt hear, with transports of joy, the ravishing harmonies of the saints, and the songs of the blessed angels. With this stammering tongue, which is to lose the faculty of speech, thou shalt sing with a loud voice the praises of Almighty God, in the glorious company of the church triumphing. With these unsteady hands that can scarce hold any thing, thou shalt one day receive immortal palms, and golden viols, which thou shalt never quit. With these feet that are dying, and that can scarce support thee, thou shalt follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and thou shalt walk about the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem. And this same body, that is going to rot, and to be turned to dust, shall one day shine as the firmament, and as the sun in its greatest splendour.

What desirest thou more, Christian soul, for thy comfort? What addition can there be made to thine happiness, since thou art going to the fruition of eternal joys, and of endless pleasures in heaven? In the meanwhile, the body shall endure no pain or grief; and God will shortly raise it up again from this deep sleep, that begins to dull thy senses and close thine eye-lids. Shortly God will publish the year of the great jubilee; all the prisons of death shall be then opened, and the prisoners shall be set at liberty. Thou shalt shortly hear
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the sound of the last trumpet, that shall rouse thee out of the dust, and cause thee to appear in the presence of thy great Redeemer. Thou leavest a wretched body, full of darkness and corruption, assaulted by death on all sides; but shalt shortly be made incorruptible, immortal; and adorned with light and glory.

Let therefore thy heart rejoice, thy tongue be glad, and thy flesh rest in hope; for the Lord will not leave thee always in the grave, he will not suffer thee to continue for ever in dust and corruption; he will not only discover to thee the ways of life, but he will shortly come down himself from heaven to transport thee thither.

When death shall be upon thy lips, when it shall be ready to lay thee in thy grave, let not this disturb the quiet of thy soul, nor the peace of thy conscience; let it not shake thy precious faith that keeps thee up, nor drive thee from the anchor of thy blessed hope fixed in heaven, where Jesus Christ is entered as thy fore-runner. In short, when thy body shall be all covered with sores and boils, as that of Job, (ch. xix.) when it shall all fall to pieces before thine eyes, let nothing hinder thee from crying out with this patient man, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." And with St. Paul, Phil. iii. "We look from heaven for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

A PRAYER and MEDITATION of a Christian, who, being ready to depart out of the World, comforts himself with an Assurance and Expectation of the glorious Resurrection of his Body from the Dust.

O Eternal and divine Word ! by whom all things were created, and without whom was not any thing made that was made ; thou hast not only formed our souls, and fashioned our bodies with thy skilful hands, but, when they were miserably lost and corrupted with sin, thou hast been pleased to redeem both our souls and bodies with thy most precious blood, and to renew thy glorious image in us. This wretched body is but an earthen vessel ; yet thou hast inclosed in it the richest treasures of life and light. Thou hast appointed it to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and a noble pavilion of the Godhead, to participate with the soul in the eternal happiness of thy kingdom. I feel my strength failing me, and this earthly tabernacle decaying every day, and every hour, so that I am certain it shall be reduced to dust. But, Lord, I am sufficiently comforted with this knowledge, that if the outward man decays, the inward is renewed day by day ; if this wretched body falls down by death, thou wilt raise it up again at the general resurrection. My Lord and my God, thou art sufficiently able ; for all power is given to thee in heaven, and in earth, and the depths of the sea. As the Father raiseth and quickeneth the dead, thou dost also quicken them whom thou hast chosen. Thou hast fashioned my body of dust, and created this dust of nothing ; and shalt not thou be able of the same dust, into which this my body shall be turned by death, to make and fashion it again ? Thou hast by thine almighty power created my soul, and infused it into this body ; and canst not thou command it back again, when it shall please thee, to live for ever in a more blessed society than before ? O Prince of life, Death hath sufficiently felt

felt in thy person thy infinite power. Its purpose was to devour thee, but thou hast overcome it in a glorious manner. Thou hast yielded to die, but art returned to live for ever and ever, and hast in thy custody the keys of hell and of death, to open and shut, to kill and make alive, at thy pleasure. Lord Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life! I know that thou art both willing and able to deliver this body out of the power of death, and awake my sleeping dust with the sound of the archangel's trumpet, as thou hast promised. I expect to see that glorious day of thy triumph, when, accompanied by all the mighty angels of heaven, thou wilt set at liberty all the prisoners of death, and restore to us again all the blessings forfeited by sin. The sea and the earth shall surrender unto thee the bodies they have in their custody, and obey thy commands. O omnipotent Word, that made the heavens and earth! thou shalt be heard, and operate effectually in our graves, that we may march out, and stand before the dreadful tribunal. We shall then appear, not wrapt in our winding-sheets, as Lazarus, nor with any relics of infirmity, but with bodies more beautiful, perfect, and glorious, than formerly: so that we may have good cause to admire the glory of that second building, which by thine almighty power thou wilt rear out of the dust, and which will be far greater than the present. For this infirm body shall be made conformable to the celestial body, this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortality shall be swallowed-up by immortality, and an eternal life. I am therefore fully persuaded, my glorious Redeemer! that with these languishing eyes I shall behold thy magnificent coming in a cloud, surrounded with flames of fire, and sitting on a throne. With these ears I shall hear the terrible and loud voice of the archangel's trumpet, and the songs of the blessed companies of heaven. With this tongue I hope to tune forth thy divine praises; with these dying hands to embrace thee, my blessed Saviour; and with these trembling feet, already in the grave, I shall follow thee into

into thy heavenly Jerusalem; and this same body, condemned to rot in a tomb, shall one day shine in thy heavenly kingdom. I am ready, Lord, to depart hence; my breath fails me, death appears before me, threatening to strike the last stroke; but, notwithstanding all difficulties and objections, I know I shall rise again to behold thy magnificence and glory. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXIV.

The twelfth Consolation: The Destruction of Death, and the eternal and most blessed Life which we shall enjoy both in Soul and Body after our Resurrection.

WE have sufficiently treated of that happiness which is prepared for our souls at their departure from their bodies, and of the glorious resurrection promised to these bodies when Jesus Christ shall come down from heaven in his glory to judge the quick and the dead. It seems that we have nothing more to say; but as Moses, when he had made the ark of shittim-wood, and lined it with fine gold, he put round about a crown of gold upon the top; in the same manner, now that we have declared to you the incorruption and future glory of our bodies, which are to be looked upon as a sacred ark, where God's majesty shall dwell for ever; now that we have shewn how, by the almighty and gracious power of God, they shall become more incorruptible than the shittim-wood, and more glorious than fine gold: I will now, with God's assistance, draw about them a crown more precious than the purest gold, and richer than all the jewels in the world. I mean to crown this work, and intend to end it with as perfect a picture as I am able to draw, of the eternal glory and happiness which we expect to enjoy both in soul and body, after our resurrection. But, first, I shall say something of the en-

tire and perfect destruction of all our enemies; and represent to you the overthrow and the final conquest over death.

When Jesus Christ shall appear again to judge the world in righteousness, he shall sit upon a glorious and most splendid throne. Solomon's magnificent throne was but its shadow, and imperfect type. He shall then send forth his angels, who shall gather together the *elect*, with the *sound of a trumpet*, from the four parts of the world, and from one end of the heavens to the other. The sight of this glorious Saviour shall then fill us with an unspeakable joy, and cause us to burst forth into this language, Isa. xxv. "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." But when all the kindreds of the earth shall behold this magnificent King in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, they shall lament and strike their breasts in great despair, they shall call to the mountains and rocks, Rev. vi. "Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come: who shall be able to stand?"

Then the Lord shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall manifest the thoughts of the heart, with the most secret contrivances. The books shall be opened, not only of the guilty consciences, where Satan's image and deeds shall be engraven, but also the other books, where God himself hath written, with his own finger, all our actions, words, and our most hidden thoughts. All men shall be judged according to the things written in the books. St. John declares this, in the xxth of the Revelations: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was no place for them; and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the

the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Unto this St. Paul agrees, " We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive in his body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil."

There are three sorts of persons who are to stand before this glorious tribunal. Such as never had any other tutor but nature, who were not acquainted with any other works of God, but of creation and providence ; for God hath not left himself without witness in doing good. The second sort have been assisted with a divine revelation from above, under the law, which hath distinctly taught them what works are pleasing to God. These may have heard something of a Messiah from the ancient prophets, they may have seen his portraiture in the types and shadows of Moses's ordinances. The other sort have had the grace of God clearly and plainly revealed to them, to whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. There are none of these persons, if they have lived in impiety and debauchery, and are dead in impenitency, that shall be able to excuse themselves in this dreadful day of judgment. But some are more guilty than others, therefore they shall be condemned to greater punishments.

The knowledge that God hath bestowed upon man hath been obscured by the prince of darkness, but it hath not been totally extinct ; and that law which God hath engraven in the soul of man, hath not been altogether blotted out, but there remain yet some relics ; so that no man living can affirm that he hath done all the good deeds which his conscience was persuaded that he ought to perform, and that he hath omitted all the evil acts of which his conscience convinced him. They who have lived and are dead without any law of God revealed to them, shall be judged without the law. Such shall be con-

demned for having taken pleasure in extinguishing the remains of their natural light, and in smothering the good and rational dictates of their consciences. They shall be condemned because they have abused heaven's favours, and filled themselves with God's good creatures, without returning to him due thanks ; and because they have not meditated as they ought, upon so many stately and noble works of nature, nor learned by that means to know God, who has left in these works so many impressions of his eternal power and Godhead ; and because that knowing God. they have not glorified him as God. This St. Paul teacheth in these words, "As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law ; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law ; (for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves ; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another,) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel," Rom. ii.

They that profess to know the law, shall be judged by the law ; such as have already heard the thunders of Mount Sinai, they shall one day feel the thunderbolts. They shall understand by experience, what it is to rebel against God, and to draw upon themselves, and their guilty heads, the dreadful curses of God's law, Deut. xvii. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. ii. There is no doubt but that the Jews, upon whom Moses and the prophets have spent so many fruitless exhortations to live well, shall be punished with sharper torments than the poor savages, to whom God never sent any message, who never had any acquaintance with the commonwealth of Israel, being strangers from the covenant, having no hope, and being without God

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in the world, Eph. ii. For that servant who knoweth his master's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with more stripes than he that knoweth it not, Luke xii.

But no people upon earth have cause to expect and dread a more severe sentence than wicked Christians, who make profession of knowing God, and believing in Jesus Christ, who nevertheless deny him by their works, and trample under foot the riches of his grace. How can it be otherwise? For such as have heard the gospel preached, who have seen Jesus Christ as it were crucified before their eyes, and yet have made no advantage of all this, ought to be punished in another manner, than the bare auditors of Moses, that never saw the Messias, but afar off, and in the shadows of the ceremonial law. Take notice of these divine expressions of St. Paul to the Hebrews, "He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Therefore when St. Paul speaks of such as obey not the gospel, he saith, That they shall be punished with eternal punishments from the presence of God, and from the glory of his power. And our Saviour teacheth us, that such as reject so great salvation, shall be punished more grievously than the most abominable sinners, unto whom it was never revealed. Therefore when he sends forth his apostles to preach, he tells them, "Whosoever shall not receive you, and hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet: Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land

sign of the Son of Man, all those things which declare the end of the world, and the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead. If we take the words in this sense, there will be an excellent allusion to that which is commonly practised when kings and princes make their public entry into great cities; for their coming in is proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet, and by the attendants of majesty, a train and pomp that usually accompanies it. In the same manner, the glorious coming of Jesus Christ shall be known by the sound of the archangel's trumpet, and by the signs and wonderful alterations which shall suddenly happen in the heavens. This last opinion is very likely, and the former is not contrary to the analogy of faith.

Therefore in matters indifferent, not plainly decided by the word of God, we leave to every pious soul a liberty to choose that which it likes best.

Some inquire farther, if the souls of the damned go down into hell immediately after their egress out of the body, and are tormented in an unquenchable fire, whereof the heat never lessens, as the Christian religion teacheth, and as we may understand by the parable of the rich glutton; doth it not follow, that these wretches are already judged? How is it then, that the Son of God will judge them again at the last day, and send them to an everlasting burning prepared for the devil and his angels?—I answer, First, That it is no absurdity to say, that one sentence shall be pronounced twice; for men are wont to read the sentence of doom to the prisoner, before he is taken out of prison; afterwards the same sentence is published in the audience of the people, at the time of execution. Likewise when the souls of the wicked depart out of their wretched bodies, God pronounceth to them the sentence of death; but when Jesus Christ shall sit upon the throne of his glory, he shall publish the same sentence before

before all the men of the world, and all the angels of heaven. Besides, that sentence was never declared but to the soul ; but then it shall be declared to both soul and body, and both together shall be sent to the everlasting burning, from whence they never shall be released. From hence, therefore, Christians, you may understand, that there are three degrees of punishment or torments to the wicked ; for in this life they have a worm that gnaws their bowels and heart, and a kind of hell, where they suffer unspeakable torments. At that time their bodies are senseless in their graves, as the bodies of the righteous ; but at this last and dreadful day of judgment, as the graves shall restore all the dead bodies, hell, which is the place designed for the torments of the damned, shall give up all the souls that are tormented in its flames ; and these cursed souls shall be sent back to their miserable bodies, to suffer the pangs of an eternal death, Rev. xx. Thus they shall be cast body and soul into the bottomless pit, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. At that time the beast, the false prophet, and all the enemies of God and of his church, shall be cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, Rev. xx. 10, 14. And when all these offenders shall be executed, the executioners themselves shall be punished for their crimes ; when the damned shall be cast into eternal tortures, the devils and infernal furies shall be sent after them ; as it is said, “ The devil, who seduced the nations, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,” Rev. xx. 10. What a dreadful sight will it be to look upon all those roaring lions, those furious dragons, in their rage vomiting forth fire and flames ! What a joyful spectacle shall this be to the children of God, to look upon these infernal devils, bound fast with those chains which they shall never be able to break, and shut up in the bottomless pit, out of which they never shall be released !

Our Lord shall cast into this lake of fire and brimstone, and shut up in this bottomless pit, not only the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, and in general all wicked souls and unbelievers, but he shall cast therein also death and the grave, or rather, he shall abolish them for ever. As Joshua, when he conquered the kings of the Amorites, put them not to death until he had overcome all his enemies; likewise our Lord Jesus Christ, our true Joshua, has encountered with Death upon the cross, and overcome it by his resurrection; but he will not destroy it altogether until the last day, when he shall come to judge the world. Then, to perfect all his glorious victories, he shall destroy this last enemy, this destroyer of his brethren, and of his members; so that "death shall be no more." It shall be no more for the wicked, they shall seek it in vain to be freed from their torments. It shall fly away from them as a shadow that departs, and is no more to be found. Death shall be no more for God's children; for it shall never disturb their rest and happiness.

If the old serpent could enter into paradise, we should fear his temptations and inflamed darts; and if death continued in his empire, we should dread its approaches. But then it shall not have the least power, it shall be totally abolished; and all the living shall become immortal. And although God will not destroy the being, nor take away the malice, of the devil, yet to us he shall be as if he were not; for he shall never be able to break his chains, or to escape out of his prison; and between him and us there shall be depths that can never be filled. So that as Moses, when he cast his eye upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who pursued the frightened Israelites, he told them, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you to-day; for the Egyptians, whom you have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever:" likewise when ye think upon Satan, and all his infernal armies that pursue you, you may say with confidence,
Settle

Settle your minds, Christian souls, and with the eye of faith behold the salvation of the Lord; for these hellish furies, that have persecuted you so long, shall be reduced to that condition, that they shall not be able to do you the least displeasure, or to give you any apprehension. God is going to drown them in the Red Sea of his wrath, and to shut them up for ever in the bottomless pit of his just revenge. So that, as in the heavenly paradise, there shall be neither pain, nor sorrow, nor grief, nor crying, nor sighs, heard; likewise there shall never be any fear or fright, or the least alarm; but we shall live there in a settled peace and quiet for ever.

It is reported of the Macedonians, that they wept for joy when they beheld their king, Alexander the Great, seated on the throne of Darius, and trampling under feet the pride and empire of Persia. But how exceeding great shall our joy be, when we shall behold Jesus Christ, our great Monarch, sitting upon the throne of God, and trampling under feet the pomp of the world, crushing the red dragon and all the tyrannical powers of hell! The glory of Alexander vanished away with his breath; death destroyed all his trophies: but our Lord shall triumph over death itself; it shall be the last act of his eternal justice, to destroy the great murderer from the beginning.

At that time there shall be no more enemies to encounter with, no evils to be feared, neither shall there be any advantage to be desired, nor honours to be expected; for God will admit us to the bottomless ocean of the most divine pleasures, and raise us up to the highest glory that nature shall be capable of. This happiness, and this glory, shall be infinite in regard of its durance. It shall not be like the pomp and magnificence of the kings and princes of this world, which vanished away in an instant; nor like to the brightness of Moses's face, which departed with his life; nor like the
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transfiguration of Christ upon Mount Tabor, which soon disappeared. For when it shall have continued as many hundred ages as there are stars in the firmament, it shall then but begin and appear in its rising; so that there we may have just cause, and more reason than St. Peter, to say, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." There is no place in the world so pleasant and delightful, but at last one shall be weary to continue in it; nor company so amiable and sweet, but becomes tedious in time; nor pleasure so ravishing, but gives a distaste. The greatest persons on earth sigh under the burden of their greatness; the brightness of their glory dazzles them: when nothing troubles them, they are troubled of their own accord, and their most magnificent triumphs disturb and weary them. Oft-times their heart groans in the midst of the greatest acclamations and public applause; they think themselves more unhappy than those who envy their apparent happiness. For all that shines is not gold; the most beautiful roses are not without their prickles, and many times they hide dangerous serpents.

As the glory and happiness of paradise is infinite in regard of its durance, so in respect of its dignity and excellency. For God will not only satisfy all our desires, and answer all our expectations, but he will also give to us above all that we can ask or think.

Shall I undertake to paint out unto you this glory and perfect happiness?—When St. Paul speaks of these evangelical mysteries he assures us, that they are things that the eye of man hath never seen, that his ear hath never heard, and that never entered into his heart, 1 Cor. ii. If this hath been spoken of the doctrine that reveals this glory and eternal happiness, how are we able to comprehend the glory and happiness itself? Therefore the same apostle tells us in another place, "That God worketh in us abundantly, above that we are

are able to ask or think," Eph. iii. I cannot boast of having spoken with God face to face, as Moses, Numb. xi. of having been ravished, as St. Paul, into the third heaven, 1 Cor. xii. God hath not carried me up, as St. John, into the celestial Jerusalem; neither hath he delivered to me, as to his holy angel, a reed to measure the holy city. But when I should have enjoyed these glorious privileges, this divine entertainment, these supernatural elevations, when I should have walked about and taken a full view of the celestial Jerusalem, when I should have been in the company of the seraphims that fly about God's throne, when I should have beheld God face to face, although I were the most eloquent of all men, and spoke with the tongues of angels, and had in my hand the pencil of an archangel, I should not dare to undertake to represent this exceeding great glory, nor paint out to you the brightness of that heavenly light, whereof the beam is able to dazzle me. St. Paul had been near the body of this great light, he had beheld the riches and glory of paradise, yet he confesseth that they be things not to be expressed by any tongue.

But as those who cannot cast their eyes directly to look upon the sun, because it blinds them with its exceeding great light, behold its body with more ease and leisure in the water, or in a looking-glass; thus we shall consider and look upon the images which God himself hath expressed for us in his holy word, of this divine brightness of heaven, which we are not able otherwise to comprehend. For God hath dealt with us as a father doth with his young babes, who babbles with them, and represents to them the light of the sun with a black coal; or as the astrologers, who represent the heavenly constellations by the figure of birds, or four-footed beasts, and of creeping things. For nothing can enter into our understanding, but by the door of our senses; therefore spiritual and celestial things are represented under the notion of corporeal and

and earthly enjoyments, which we passionately love. And because there is not one thing here below, that can express to us the glory and happiness of paradise, so many perfections are not to be found in any one enjoyment; therefore the Holy Ghost gathers together all the excellencies, riches, and beauty, scattered about in the inferior creatures, and borrows the ideas and notions of those things that are rarest and most glorious, and that give us the greatest pleasure and satisfaction, to represent to us the glory of heaven.

To begin, in the first place, with the word *Paradise*; it signifies a delightful and a pleasant garden; it is often made use of to express to us the joys and happiness of the life to come, and to make us sensible, that what we have lost by Adam is restored to us by Jesus Christ. Our Lord and Saviour, who is goodness itself, shall bestow upon us another Eden, another garden of pleasure, watered with living water, In the midst of it is the tree of life, that brings forth its fruits every month. Instead of an earthly paradise, subject to change, we shall find an heavenly and an unchangeable paradise. The earthly paradise is no more to be seen; it is thought that it was swallowed up and destroyed by the waters of the deluge; but the heavenly paradise can never be destroyed by the fiercest fire, nor by the most swelling waves. It is above all winds, storms, and tempests. Therefore St. Peter assures us, "that it is an incorruptible inheritance, that fadeth not away." It hath no need of an elemental water; for it is watered every where with the river of living water that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb. And whereas cherubims, armed with a flaming sword, stood at the entrance of the earthly paradise, to hinder Adam from approaching near to the tree of life, and from gathering of its fruits; now whole legions of cherubims are to carry us upon their wings to the true tree of life which stands in the midst of the heavenly paradise; and Jesus Christ himself, the Prince of all
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The angels, of all the cherubims and seraphims, promiseth to admit us to partake of its delicious fruits, by these blessed words, "To him that shall overcome, I will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

It is the common custom of men to have an high esteem of beautiful and great cities, whereof the buildings are stately, and the inhabitants numerous: therefore the Jews were wont to boast of Jerusalem, and to call it, "The city perfect in beauty, The joy of the whole earth." Therefore the Holy Ghost represents to us the glory and happiness of heaven by a city, which he names Jerusalem. And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, makes the same allusion. For when he had said, "That Abraham by faith had sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;" he adds immediately after, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" and a little after, "God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city," Heb. xi. And in the xiiith chapter of the same epistle, he speaks to believers in this manner, "Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." And elsewhere, "We have no continuing city here below; but we seek one to come," Heb. xiii. 14.

God is pleased, not only to describe to us our future paradise under the general notion of a city, and of Jerusalem, but he discovers to us its heavenly beauty, its glory, and magnificence. You cannot find a richer and more excellent image than that of St. John, who himself had been a spectator of the New Jerusalem, and had beheld all its rarities and wonders. For when the angel, who had in his hand a golden reed to measure this glorious city, had said unto him, "Come, I will shew thee the spouse, the wife of the Lamb," he

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carried him in the spirit to an high mountain, from whence he had a prospect of this great and holy city Jerusalem, which came down from heaven from God, decked as a spouse prepared for her husband, having the glory of God and his light. This faithful witness assures us, that its buildings, and the streets of this blessed city, were all of fine gold, as bright as crystal; its foundations were of precious stones; its twelve gates were twelve pearls; at each of them stood an angel of God. This holy city had no need of the light of the sun, or of the light of the moon; for the light of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There is no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

It is our delight to abide in stately and magnificent houses, and in rich and glorious palaces: therefore paradise is expressed to us by a dwelling, and by a palace which God himself hath built with his own hands. This is the picture the royal prophet represents to us in Psl. lxxv. when he speaks of "God's house, and of the holy place of his palace." And St. Paul doth the like in 2 Cor. v. when he saith, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And our Saviour, when he was ready to leave the world, comforts his apostles in this manner, "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you." And St. John heard a mighty voice from heaven, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men; he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Every one desires to be rich; there be some that esteem it their chief happiness. Therefore the Holy Ghost represents the happiness of heaven under the notion of riches and treasure; our Saviour himself speaks of it in this manner, in the vith of St. Matthew, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon

upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." Therefore when the Holy Ghost describes heaven's glory, and mentions gold, pearls, and precious stones, it hath a regard to this notion.

And because men are for the most part desirous of honours, greatness, and dignities, and that there is nothing in the world more esteemed than sceptres and crowns ; therefore the glory of heaven is expressed by a kingdom, by thrones, crowns, and triumphs. Our Saviour speaks in this language to his apostles, "To you who have continued with me in my afflictions, I appoint a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me," Luke xxii. In another place he speaks of all his church in general. "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xx. And at the last day he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. And to the angel of his church at Smyrna, and the faithful souls, this divine Saviour makes this promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii. And to the angel of the church of Laodicea, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. And St. Paul tells us, "That we run to obtain an incorruptible crown," 1 Cor. ix. And when he saw himself at the end of his race, he cries out, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. And St. James speaks in the same language, "Blessed is the man that endureth temp-

tation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him," James i. Finally, we read that the glorified saints have palms in their hands, and crowns of gold upon their heads, and in their mouths songs of praise. They speak thus to our Saviour, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us to our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on earth," Rev. iv. 4.

The great men of the world delight in gorgeous apparel, some in perfumed garments; therefore the Holy Ghost condescends to this weakness of man, and promiseth in heaven robes more fragrant than the perfumes of Arabia. He promiseth a garment whiter than snow, and brighter than the light itself. And Solomon, when he considers his spouse as the type of the church, he saith, "The King's daughter is full of glory within; her clothing is of wrought gold; she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework."

And when God himself speaks of the glory of his church, which he begins now, and will perfect hereafter, he saith, that he hath adorned her with gold, silver, and precious stones; that he hath clothed her with fine linen, with silk and needlework. Therefore the church speaks in this manner: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robes of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. And if you take notice of such as stand before the throne of God, and the presence of the Lamb, that worship him day and night in his temple, you will find them clothed with long robes, whitened in the blood of the Lamb. Look also upon that magnificent woman of the *Revelations*, the true type and representation of the church, and you shall see her clothed with the sun, and a crown of
twelve

twelve stars upon her head. In a word, hearken to the song of the glorified saints, and you shall hear them speaking to one another, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to God; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready; and to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Men commonly love good cheer, and to partake of sumptuous feasts; therefore the heavenly delights are represented to us under the notion of delicious meats and exquisite drinks, of noble feasts, and magnificent banquets. In this manner the royal prophet speaks to them in the xxxvth Psalm, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings; they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." And in the xlvth Psalm, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; he shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." And the prophet Isaiah speaks in the same language, "In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. This consideration causeth a doctor in the gospel to say, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of heaven." And our Saviour himself saith, that many shall come from the "east and from the west, and shall sit at table in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Ahasuerus's feast continued an hundred days; but the feast which we shall celebrate in heaven, and which hath been preparing from the foundation of the world, shall continue for all eternity.

Of all feasts, such as are for nuptial solemnities are most
esteemed,

esteemed, when they are for kings and princes of the earth ; for on such occasions there are the greatest and most extraordinary rejoicings. Therefore the happiness of heaven is expressed by a marriage. Our Saviour himself makes use of this comparison in the xiiith chapter of St. Matthew ; “ The kingdom of God, (saith he,) is like unto a King which made a marriage for his son.” This caused the glorious church to speak in this manner, “ Let us rejoice and be glad, and give glory to the Lord our God, for the marriage of the Lamb is come. Finally, the Holy Ghost hath commanded to write and record these words for ever, “ Blessed are those that are called to the marriage feast of the Lamb.”

Some persons are very much delighted with the sweet and pleasant concerts of music. Therefore the Holy Ghost, to signify to us that in heaven there shall be all manner of pleasures, and nothing wanting, tells us, that about God's throne millions of angels and glorified saints shall sing forth the Divine praise. Besides, he acquaints us with the substance of their heavenly songs. When Isaiah mentions these wonderful seraphims that fly round about God's glorious throne, he saith, that “ they cry to one another, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, of Hosts ! the whole earth is full of thy glory.” And when St. John speaks of those glorified saints, he saith, that they stand before his magnificent throne, playing with their harps, and singing a new song, that is to say, a most rare and excellent song ; and that they have always in their mouths the song of Moses and of the Lamb ; and that heaven itself resounds with their sacred hallelujahs, which signifies, *Praise God, or Set forth the praises of God.* There is no ingenuous soul but loves peace and rest ; for this cause the glory and happiness of paradise is represented under this lovely and pleasant notion, as in the ivth chapter of the Hebrews ; “ For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my

my rest. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day; there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God; for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." This caused old Simeon to cry out, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." Finally, the holy city is called *Jerusalem*, which signifies, *A vision of peace*. And God himself makes this promise, "Behold, I will extend peace to her as a river," Isa. xlv. Wherefore, if this peace which God grants to believing souls in this life, surpasseth all understanding, Phil. iv. what may we judge shall be the full enjoyment of an eternal peace in the kingdom of heaven? The tongues of men and angels are not able to express its dignity and excellency.

Lastly, Because men are lovers of pleasures, delights, and pomp; and that the most part seek for nothing but how to drive away their sorrows, and to recreate themselves with pastimes: therefore the felicities of paradise are represented by rejoicings, pleasures, and eternal solemnities, as in Psa. xxxvi. "Thou shalt cause them to drink of the river of thy pleasure." And in Psa. cxxvi. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." And God himself, speaking of that most blessed time, saith, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; but be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. Therefore when the Holy Ghost represents the condition of the glorified saints, he declares not only, that God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and that there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor labour, nor pain, nor grief; but he adds, over and above, that in their mouths there shall be songs of praise, and upon their heads an eternal joy of gladness, like to a precious crown, which shall never be taken from them. For this cause they call so earnestly upon one another,

another, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to the Lord our God," Rev. xix.

All our senses shall partake in these heavenly and everlasting pleasures; our eyes shall behold with transports of joy the sacred countenance of our Redeemer, the riches and wonderful beauty of his palace, the glory and magnificence of his empire; our ears shall be delighted with the music of the blessed saints, and with the harmonies of angels, and of the church triumphant; our smelling shall receive the sweet perfumes of the bridegroom, whose garments are of myrrh, and the grateful odours of his vine always blossoming. Our palate shall taste the bread of angels, the hidden manna, the fruits of the tree of life, the waters issuing forth to everlasting life, and the new wine of the kingdom of heaven. Our hands shall embrace the Saviour of the world, and with our feet we shall walk about the streets of that golden city, the heavenly Jerusalem, and we shall follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, Rev. xiv.

Although I speak to you in this manner, I am persuaded, Christian souls, that you understand very well, that these expressions, and such like, are not to be understood in a literal sense; they are but dark shadows, and imperfect images of the advantages of the life to come. You have not forgot what St. Paul saith, "That there are things which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and which never entered into the heart of man, which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. And that this great God, whose riches are inexhaustible, doth in us abundantly above what we are able to ask or think, Eph. iii. So that when you see before you all the most beautiful, amiable, glorious, and excellent things in the world, you may say in yourselves, Without doubt the glory and happiness of heaven is something more than all this; for it is elevated so much above all earthly enjoyments, and surpasseth so much all the thoughts and conceits

conceits of man, that it is not possible to describe it in its own colours, nor to fancy it really as it is.

Think not therefore, Christian souls, to meet in heaven with a paradise something like to your gardens; nor with flowers like to such as adorn your pleasant walks and fields; nor fruits like to such as hang upon your trees. You may be assured, that God will discover things infinitely more pleasant and delightful, and more lasting. Fancy not such a city, built up as ours is, where gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones are to be seen. You may expect something more noble and magnificent than all the richest and most stately cities in the world. God will cause you to see, not only the beauty of silver, the purity of gold, the whiteness of pearls, and the brightness of precious stones, but you shall discover something more beautiful, purer, whiter, brighter, and something more surprising, than any earthly thing. Think not to receive any material crown, or to ascend upon thrones, like to those of kings and princes; you may justly fancy something more glorious, and more lasting.

I am also persuaded, Christians, that you expect not in heaven to find tables covered, as those of the rich worldlings, nor to glut yourselves with a feast, like that of the nuptials of earthly princes; without doubt, your faith hath an eye to something more heavenly and glorious. Your soul hungers for more exquisite dainties, and is athirst for more delicious and sweeter drinks. You are too well instructed to think to live in heaven an animal and sensual life. Such a gross conceit becomes only the impostor Mahomet, and his imaginary paradise.

In this life that we lead upon earth, there are two things which chiefly discover our natural infirmity. The first is, our eating and drinking, absolutely necessary to make up the breaches caused by labour, and the natural heat, which spend and feed upon the radical humour, which serves to our life

as oil to a lamp. The other is marriage, appointed by God for the continuance and propagation of the human race. But in heaven our life shall be altogether angelical, spiritual, and supernatural. Our bodies shall be no more subject to corruption, nor to any alteration; they shall want no more food than the stars do at present, and the rest of the celestial bodies. Therefore the Holy Ghost speaks expressly, that we shall neither hunger nor thirst, that the sun shall not burn, nor any other heat trouble us. That is to say, we shall never be inclinable to eat or drink; the most burning heats, and the fiercest flames, shall have no power to hurt our bodies, when they shall cast off all sensual and earthly qualities, and instead of them, shall be clothed with light and glory. Therefore at that time there shall be no need of propagating the species, or of multiplying the persons by marriage; for we shall not be then subject to earthly passions, and the number of the elect shall be complete. The congregation of the saints shall be full, and the building of the church shall be perfectly made up. Therefore our Saviour Jesus Christ assures us, that in the kingdom of heaven they shall neither take nor give in marriage, but that we shall be like the angels of God; we shall enjoy the light of their understanding, the holiness of their wills, and the purity of their affections.

When the queen of Sheba saw the glory and state of king Solomon, and heard all his excellent discourses, she was ravished in admiration, and told this great prince, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom; howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard; happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." I am persuaded, believing souls, that something like to this shall happen to us, when we shall come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to behold our Lord Jesus Christ himself, of whom
Solomon

Solomon was but a type and a figure ; for he had but a spark of his glory, and but a beam of his wisdom. When we shall see this peaceable King crowned with an heavenly rainbow, we shall be ravished into admiration, and as it were transported out of ourselves ; then we shall speak in this manner to his Divine Majesty : O glorious Monarch, all that I have ever heard or imagined of thy wisdom, of thy glory, riches, beauty, and extraordinary pleasure of thy paradise, is less than true ; for it is not the thousandth part of that which I see this day. O blessed are they that dwell in thy house, and that praise thee without ceasing. Happy are they who behold thy glorious face, and hear thy divine wisdom. After that the queen of Sheba had been some time in the court of king Solomon, she returned back to her own home ; but when we shall be once entered into the glory and happiness of paradise, we shall never depart out again. We shall behold continually this glorious King of kings, and we shall hear with divine transports of joy the wonderful expressions of his wisdom ; we shall not only be with him for ever and ever, but we shall always be in him, and he in us.

To take off your mind from all carnal and worldly thoughts, the glory and happiness of paradise is represented to us by the light, as in Dan. xii. " They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever." And in Matt. xiii. our Saviour saith expressly, " That the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of his Father."

Finally, It is promised as the highest glory and happiness, that we shall stand before the throne of God, that we shall sit with Jesus Christ upon his throne, and that we shall see his face. St. John in Rev. xxii. speaks in this manner, in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem ; he saith, that the throne of God, and of the Lamb, are in it ; that his servants

shall serve him and see his face, and that his name shall be upon their forehead. When we look upon the sun, our faces become not brighter, nor more luminous, nay, many times our eyes thereby dazzle, and our skin becomes blacker and more swarthy. But when we look upon God in his love and glory, we shall be perfectly enlightened, and become brighter and more shining. This appears by Moses's person ; when he came down from the holy mountain, his face was full of beams of light, so that the children of Israel could not endure his splendour. If therefore this faithful servant of God had such a bright countenance, by his continuance with God upon an earthly mountain, during the space of forty days and forty nights, and by a sight of some light expressions of his glory ; what will be, think ye, your light, and the brightness of your countenances, when you shall be raised above the heavens, to continue with God, and to behold his face thousands and thousands of ages ; and the end of all that time, it shall be but the beginning of that most blessed contemplation which shall never end ?

When we cast our eyes upon a beautiful person, we become neither more beautiful nor happier. Nothing but an unprofitable *idea* remains in our fancy, and many times that also quickly vanisheth away. But when we shall look upon God, we shall become like him, and in this likeness we shall find fulness of joy, of happiness and glory ; this is promised to us by the royal prophet in Psa. xvi. "In thy presence, O God, is fulness of joy ; and at thy right-hand there are pleasures for evermore." And in Psa. xvii. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness ; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." And the beloved disciple of the Beloved of the Father, whose writings are full of love, confirms this truth : "Beloved, (saith he,) now we are the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is."

You see therefore, Christian souls, to what a high perfection of glory and felicity we have a right to pretend. For in heaven God shall not only make us shine as the sun and the stars, he shall not only clothe us with the brightness of the glorified saints and angels ; but he promises a great deal more, to make us like to himself ; he shall not only satisfy us with the fatness of his house, and cause us to drink of the rivers of his pleasures ; he shall not only fill us with his treasures, enlighten us with his brightness, clothe us with his honours, and crown us with his glory ; but he himself will become our meat and our drink, our treasure, our sun and glory. And, if I may so speak, to satisfy and perfect our happiness, God shall as it were dissolve himself into rivers and seas of divine and unspeakable pleasures. But, that I may not be misunderstood in such bold and figurative language, it shall suffice me to say with St. Paul, “ That God will be in us all in all ; ” that is to say, that he will dwell and make his abode in us, in respect of his being ; and that he will cause us to feel in his glorious presence, as much as a finite and a limited nature, as ours, is capable of. What the Jews have invented of the *manna* which their fathers fed on in the wilderness, may justly be appropriated to Almighty God, as he intends to reveal himself to us in heaven. For there is no taste but shall be satisfied, no desire but shall be filled. Moreover, God shall be our meat and our drink, our light, also our clothing, and all that we can imagine ; in him and his divine enjoyments, we shall find beyond all that we can think or desire. The knowledge of spiritual and celestial things, which we can attain to here, is like the breaking of the day ; and that we shall enjoy hereafter, like that of the sun, when it shines in our meridian. But, to speak in the apostle’s language, “ Now we know in part, and we prophesy in part ; but when that which is perfect shall come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then we shall see him face to face.” Whilst we continue in this life, God discovers

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to us only the borders of his wisdom; we cannot understand much of it. But, in the life to come, he shall reveal to us the depths of his] glorious mysteries, into which the angels themselves desire to pry. In our understandings, God shall be as a sun, to enlighten them for ever and ever; and to scatter away all mists of errors and mistakes. At present our will hath its imperfections, and oft-times it rebels against God; but then it shall be perfectly sanctified and reformed according to the image of God. It shall burn with an holy zeal, and with a love for him. It shall desire nothing but his glory, and a conformity to his holy will. . It shall not only obey God without resistance, but it shall fly with an holy earnestness and speed, to the performance of his sacred commands. Whilst we remain in the fetters of this infirm and sinful flesh, there is always some filth and disorder in our affections; but when we shall come to this state of glory, God will sanctify them in such a manner by his holy presence, that they shall be purer and clearer than the stars or the sunbeams; they shall become celestial fires, and divine flames, proceeding from God's love to us. In a word, that Being of beings, who is perfection itself, that Author and Origin of all beauty, that object so exceeding glorious and lovely, shall ravish us in such a manner, that our understandings shall be continually employed in beholding him; our wills and affections in loving and embracing him; and all the faculties of our souls shall labour to be united to him, and to be like him. It shall be in this manner that we shall be made partakers of the divine nature. For we must not fancy that we shall be made partakers of God's infinite being; for his divine essence is indivisible, and uncommunicable to the creature, so that none but God can enjoy it. But God's holiness shall imprint in our souls its blessed and glorious image, and that of all its wonderful perfections; when God shall shew himself to us as he is, he will cause us to become like him, by producing in us an impression of his divine countenance.

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It may be you will inquire of me, Whether we shall see God, and how we shall behold him?—This question is so rich and considerable, that it deserves to be examined with an holy and religious application. I am persuaded, Christians, that you will not be displeased not only to hear my judgment, but that of the holy scriptures, from whence we draw all our instruction, as out of a fountain. Some imagine, that God cannot be seen, neither in this life, nor in the life to come. Their reasons are very strong and weighty; for First, God is of an invisible nature. This attribute is ascribed to him by the sacred writers; as in the xith of the Hebrews the apostle saith, that Moses, by faith, saw him who is invisible. And in the 1st epistle to Timothy, in the first chapter, he saith, “To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever,” *Amen*. Secondly, We read in the xxxiiid of Exodus, when Moses said to God, “I pray thee let me see thy glory;” God answered him, “Thou canst not see my face; for no man shall ever see my face and live.” Thirdly, St. John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, speaketh thus, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Lastly, St. Paul seems to remove all doubts; for he saith not only, “that God alone hath immortality, that he dwells in a light unto which no man can approach, and that no man hath ever seen him;” but he saith more, “that no man can see him,” 1 Tim. vi.

Others are of a contrary opinion, That God may be seen in this life, but that in the life to come he shall be seen more perfectly. That which encourageth this opinion is, that God hath put into the hearts of all his children an earnest desire of seeing his face; and that in this contemplation they place their greatest happiness and glory. This was David's desire, a man after God's own heart, in the ivth Psalm, “There may be that say, Who shall shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up
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the light of thy countenance upon us." And in *Psa. lxi.* "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God!" This is the desire also of the prophet *Asaph*, in the *lxxxvth Psalm*, "God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Secondly, We have heard *David* say, "I shall see thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness," *Psa. xvii.* And *St. Paul* promiseth, that we shall see God face to face. And *St. John* assures us, "That we shall see God as he is." Thirdly, In the *xiith chapter of Numbers*, God speaks in this manner to *Aaron* and *Miriam*, who had murmured against their brother *Moses*, "If there be a prophet amongst you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream: my servant *Moses* is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold." Lastly, We have heard the voice from heaven, that represents to us the blessed state of the glorified, saying, that "they shall see the face of God."

If it were lawful for me to engage myself in such an high meditation, which is above the capacity of men and angels, I should declare to you in a few words, how it may be said that we shall see God, and in what manner it is impossible to behold him. But first, we must take notice of two or three distinctions, which, being well understood, will remove the principal difficulties in question.

First, God may be considered in three several respects; as he is in himself, and in his proper being. It is in this respect that our souls earnestly long for him, and desire to draw near, and be united to him, as to their sovereign good, and the bottomless fountain of glory and happiness. Secondly, As he reveals and discovers himself on earth, by
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certain images and tokens of his favourable reception. Thirdly, As he shall manifest himself in heaven by the glorious images, and divine marks of his presence.

Secondly, We must distinguish the several kinds of sight; for there is a sight of the body, which looks only upon the objects, whereof the images and species are within the reach and capacity of our eye-sight, as are colour and light. There is the sight of the understanding, which sees and beholds the things that are at a distance from our senses, as the spiritual and invisible substances, and the essential forms of the body. There is also the sight of faith, which riseth yet something higher than our understandings, as it is during our abode here below; when it is enlightened with God's divine grace, it sees and beholds things which the eye of the body never saw, and the sensual understandings of men could never comprehend; as the mysteries of the Christian religion, and the powers of the world to come.

Lastly, We must distinguish the knowledge of the understanding; for sometimes it is obscure and confused, at other times it is clear and distinct. Moreover, that knowledge which is the clearest and the most distinct, is of two sorts; the one hath bounds and limits suitable to its subject, that is to say, suitable to the ability and reach of the understanding; the other is absolute, and of the same extent as its object, that is to say, as the thing itself which the understanding looks upon and beholds.

God, as he is in himself, and in his own essence and being, hath never been seen by the eye of the body, and shall never be, neither in this life, nor in the life to come; for God is a spirit, and of an invisible nature, John iv. In this respect St. Paul affirms, "That God dwells in a light which no man can approach unto; that no man hath ever seen him, nor can

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see him." But this good God, who of himself is invisible, delights to shew himself to his creatures in several ways.

First, God shews himself to all men, in the works of the creation of the great world ; for St. Paul saith in the first of the Romans, " The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Particularly, he hath given the light, which is as his eldest daughter, and the first of all outward productions, and image and resemblance of him. For as there is nothing more ample, purer, and more beautiful than the light, so there is no visible creature that represents so well this great God, who is a Being most pure, most beautiful and perfect, the Father of lights, and the true Sun of souls.

Secondly, God discovers himself by all the workings of his wonderful providence, and chiefly in his extraordinary and miraculous operations. For when men perceive works which exceed all the ordinary strength of nature, they are forced to acknowledge, that they come immediately from an infinite power. As Pharaoh's magicians, when they found, that, by their magic art, they were not able to counterfeit Moses's miracle, confessed, " That it was the finger of God."

Thirdly, God discovers himself in his holy and divine word, which is to us a perfect and divine looking-glass, where we may see his image, and brightness of his glory ; that was St. Paul's judgment, when he saith, " That all we that behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord with open face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Fourthly, God revealed himself to the church of Israel, in the ark, the sign and ordinary token of his gracious presence.

sence. He spöke to his people from the midst of the two golden cherubims, and published his divine oracles. There was he pleased to discover himself in divers representations, chiefly in the cloud and fire which came down from heaven. Therefore the sign, bearing the name of the thing signified, is sometimes styled *the Lord*; as in that passage, where David saith, "My soul is athirst for God, for the mighty and living God; O when shall I go and appear in the presence of God!" *Psa. xlii.*

Fifthly, God manifested himself to the patriarchs and prophets, in dreams and visions, by divine raptures, and prophetic elevations. In this manner he appeared to the patriarch Jacob in Bethel; for when 'tis said, that God was at the end of the mystical ladder, which reached up to heaven, without doubt he gave some sign and testimony there of his presence. And when the prophet Isaiah mentions his glorious throne, he makes no difficulty to say, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple; above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings, with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly; and one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, and the whole earth is full of his glory! and the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke," *Isa. vi.* And the prophet Micaiah, when he speaks of this vision, he saith, "I have seen the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing at his right-hand, and at his left," *1 Kings xxii.* And the prophet Daniel describing one of his visions, speaks in this manner, "I beheld, till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

Sixthly, God shewed himself to Moses in a particular manner, not only when he appeared to him in Horeb, and spoke to him out of the flaming bush, but especially when God appeared to him in the holy mountain, and for the space of forty days and forty nights discoursed with him familiarly, as with a friend. For at that time he set before him such glorious and magnificent tokens of his divine presence, that it was almost the same thing as if he had seen God himself. God gave him more light and knowledge of his glory than any other of his prophets, and revealed himself to him in a more familiar manner than to any other living person. Because of these glorious and extraordinary appearances of God's presence and of the brightness of his light, which shined so clear in the soul of Moses, because of that holy familiarity which he had with God, that he speaks of it in such a manner, in the xiith chapter of the book of Numbers; for we cannot understand that place in a literal sense, that Moses did really see God himself, and that, with the eyes of the body, he beheld his Being, which is altogether invisible. But we must thus understand it, that never any man beheld such glorious expressions of the Godhead with the eyes of the body; that never any man discoursed so familiarly with God, as Moses; never any man hath ever had so clear and plain a knowledge of his great glory and divine majesty.

Seventhly, God hath often appeared to men in human shapes, and hath given them such visible expressions of his holy presence, that such as have seen those images, tell us, that they have seen God. It is in this manner that Jacob speaks, when he had wrestled with an human body, moved, not only by an assisting angel, but also by God himself, who discovers there his divine virtue; "I have seen, (said he,) God face to face, and my soul hath been saved," Gen. xxxii. Manoah, the father of Samson, tells as much, when he had seen the human shape in which God was pleased to appear, when he ascended up into heaven in the flames of his sacrifices :

fices: "For certain we shall die; for we have seen God," Judges xiii. In like manner, when God appeared to Abraham in the shape of a man, this man is called the Lord, and Abraham bowed himself before him, and worshipped. And at another time this holy patriarch saw no less than three human shapes which appeared to him at once. Some think that God was visible but in one of these shapes, and the two others were angels. That which confirms this opinion is, that of these three persons, there is but one that speaks as God, and receives Abraham's adoration, and then he appears no more; the two others are styled angels, in the beginning of the sixth chapter. But others believe, with some ancient doctors of the church, that these three human shapes were a true image and living representation of the most holy, most glorious, and most wonderful Trinity. In this opinion there is nothing contrary to the analogy of faith.

Finally, God hath discovered himself by his Son in a particular manner; he is named therefore, "The image of God, the image of the invisible God, and God manifest in the flesh." God hath not only imprinted in him some tokens of his Godhead, and marks of his divine power; he hath caused him not to walk and move as the borrowed bodies of the Old Testament. He hath not only engraven in him the perfect image of all his divine perfections; God is not in him in a shadow, or a figure, as he was in the ark, and in Solomon's temple, but he hath dwelt in him bodily, and by his eternal Godhead, as St. Paul informs us, "That in him dwelleth bodily, (that is to say, really and essentially,) all the fulness of the Godhead;" therefore our Saviour tells St. Philip, "That he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father," John xiv.

This being granted, let us now consider how we see God now here below, and how we shall see him hereafter in heaven. At present we see him with the eyes of the body in his
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visible works; and we see his Being also with the eye of our understanding, but in a weak and imperfect manner; we know him with a very obscure and clouded knowledge. For this cause St. Paul saith very well and truly, "That we know him in part, and we prophesy in part." We see God also with the eye of faith; it is with this eye that we see him, as Moses did, who is invisible, and that we behold our Lord Jesus Christ, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, above all the principalities and powers, worshipped and adored by all the glorified church in heaven. In paradise we hope to see with the eyes of our glorified body, the images and marks of the Divinity, so glorious and magnificent, so beautiful and full of majesty, that, in comparison of that, whatsoever appeared to the prophets and patriarchs in their illustrious visions, was nothing but obscurity and darkness. And with the same eyes of the body we shall see God in the person of our Saviour, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; so that we may well say with Job in a full assurance of faith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the last day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, I shall see God in my flesh, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another," Job xix. But for the essence of God, and for the eternal Godhead, we shall not, nor can we, see it with the eyes of the body, let them become never so glorious, incorruptible, and immortal. Neither shall we see it with the eye of faith; for then faith shall be totally abolished, and we shall not walk any more by faith, but by sight. But we shall see God with the eye of the understanding, enlightened with a divine glory. Now, as we have taken notice, there are two sorts of contemplation and knowledge; the one perfect proportioned to the object which we behold and look upon; the other imperfect, suitable to the subject that looks and sees. Our future knowledge of God, shall not be of the first, but of the latter sort; that is to say, that we shall never see
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into the bottom of the mysteries of God's divine majesty, and of his glory. We shall never know perfectly this highest Perfection, this infinite Being, this incomprehensible and glorious Godhead. For things are in their action as they are in their beings and in their abilities. Now, in the most glorious state of heaven, our beings and abilities shall be limited and circumscribed. Therefore it shall be absolutely impossible for us to comprehend perfectly the Being of God, which is infinite in itself, and in all its wonderful perfections. The holy angels themselves, the cherubims and seraphims, these creatures of light and glory, are not able to pry into these bottomless depths, they are not able to approach this infinite light. In a word, it belongs only to God himself, to comprehend and understand perfectly the infinite glory, and highest perfections of the Godhead.

Although our sight shall not be able to search into the bottom of these depths of the Divinity, though we shall never be able to comprehend perfectly the infinite Being of God; nevertheless, we hope to behold openly this wonderful object, and to obtain as much knowledge of it as shall be requisite to render us perfectly happy. For as when our eye beholds the noon-sun, it cannot stedfastly look upon it, nor receive all its beams, but it partakes of as much as is necessary to enlighten it; and when there shall be a thousand suns, our eyes would never make use of more light than they do at present. Likewise, in beholding the Father of lights, this beautiful Sun of our souls, it is altogether impossible to admit the immensity of its beams; but we shall partake of as much as shall be necessary to drive away all our darkness, and to fill us full of perfect light, to make us become light in the Lord, and to cause us to shine for ever, as so many stars and little suns. As an empty vessel, when it is cast into the sea, comprehends not all its waters, but it receives only enough to fill it up, so that there is no part empty; thus, when we shall be cast into
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the ocean of the Godhead, we shall not be able to comprehend and receive God's infinite glory and happiness; but we shall receive and comprehend as much as shall content all our desires, and satisfy all our craving appetites. So that there shall be nothing at all wanting in us, which might be expected in the highest felicity of an human creature.

I do not say, in the highest felicity, absolutely without limitation: for there are two sorts of felicities; the one absolutely perfect, beyond which there can be nothing expected. This felicity or happiness is only to be found in God. The other is perfect, in a certain degree. As the perfect happiness of the angels is to attain to that degree of glory, of which the angelical nature is capable; likewise the perfect happiness of man is to enjoy all that blessedness, which the human nature, alone and single, is able to enjoy. I must say the single nature of man, to distinguish it from that which is united to the person of the eternal Son of God. For by this union, this hath attained to an incommunicable glory, of which other creatures cannot partake in the same perfection; it hath attained to an happiness far above the glory of all the children of God, and of all the holy angels of heaven, far above what they can or may expect.

Again, I may say, that there is a supreme and perfect happiness, independent, which subsists of itself, without any foreign assistance. This kind of happiness is only to be found in God: for, as he is of himself an infinite Being, he borrows nothing from others, and of himself is absolutely and perfectly happy. The other happiness is, that which proceeds not out of ourselves, but is derived to us from another; such is the glory and happiness of the angels. This lesson the Holy Ghost teaches us in these words, "God puts light into his angels;" that is to say, that these holy spirits have nothing of light or glory in them, but what is derived to them from the
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Father of lights, and his gracious aspect. Such also is the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator. Therefore he speaks thus to God his Father, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee," John xvii. In a word, such shall be our glory and happiness; for as we have our being from God, it is from him that we derive our well-being; also it is from him only that we can expect all our glory and bliss.

From hence you may easily understand, that God is the only object, and the only source of our eternal glory, and future happiness. If you inquire from me what shall be the essential form?—I answer, That it shall be our likeness and resemblance with God; which shall be as perfect as an human creature is capable of. Now this resemblance and similitude shall consist in three things; in a pure and bright light, which shall not be mixed with the least obscurity; in a perfect and complete holiness, where there shall not be the least blemish; and in an infinite and unalterable joy and content, where there shall never be the least cloud of grief: But of this we have sufficiently treated already.

Some there are that inquire whether in paradise there shall be an equality, or an inequality, in glories and happinesses?—This question is more curious than necessary. For we need not inquire whether there shall be any more or less happy than ourselves. It should suffice us for our comfort, to know, that if we be true believers, and truly penitent; if we fear God as we ought, if we serve him with a religious mind until the last gasp; then in such a case we shall attain to the glory of the children of God, and possess them with a perfect and eternal happiness. Nevertheless, that we may seem to omit nothing which might give satisfaction to every believing soul, I shall examine this particular; but it shall be without advancing any new thing, which I have not seen in the gospel, nor learned from the true Doctor of our souls. I shall

shall declare the opinion of the most learned upon this rich and excellent subject. Afterwards I shall add my own, which I submit, as the rest of this treatise, to the judgment of the wiser and more learned persons, who are better acquainted than I am with the spiritual and heavenly enjoyments.

Some believe, that in paradise there shall be every where the same glory and happiness, equal and uniform in every person that shall enjoy it. Their principal reasons are, First, That we can have no glory nor happiness, but that which hath been purchased for us by the death and passion of our Lord; and that as this glorious Saviour hath purchased this glory and happiness for all the elect equally, they shall all enjoy it in the highest degree and perfection. Secondly, That the holiness of all the blessed shall be perfect; therefore, as they shall be all perfectly holy, they shall be all likewise perfectly happy in the same degree. Thirdly, That our Saviour saith expressly, without any exception, "That the saints shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," Matt. xxiii. Now the sun is the king of the stars, and the brightest of all the heavenly bodies. Fourthly, That the elect are represented in heaven as so many kings, having upon their heads crowns of gold, Rev. i. 4, 5. Now there is no inequality between kings; for each of them is in possession of sovereignty, and an independent and supreme authority. Fifthly, That Jesus Christ represents to us the last transactions of the world, by the parable of a father of a family, who at the end of the day bestows the same salary upon every one that hath laboured in his vineyard, Matt. xx. Sixthly, That it is said in general terms, "That we shall see God face to face; and that we shall see him as he is," 1 Cor. xiii. 1 John iii. And that in this blessed vision shall consist the chief happiness of man. Lastly, That after the resurrection, "God shall be unto us all in all;" which expression declares the highest and most complete happiness and glory.

Others think the contrary, that in heaven there shall be an inequality of glory, and several degrees of happiness. This their opinion they strengthen chiefly with two passages of holy scripture; the one in John xiv. where Christ saith to his apostles, "In my Father's house there are many mansions." The other is in 1 Cor. xv. where St. Paul, discoursing at large of the happiness of the saints after the resurrection, saith, "There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead."

There are some that are not content to believe an inequality of glory and happiness, but undertake farther to discourse of this matter, with as much confidence, as if God had admitted them to the knowledge of his eternal secrets, as if he had discovered to them all the wonders of the heavenly Jerusalem, more plainly than to his beloved disciple. They tell us, that there shall be not only divers degrees of glory and happiness; but they affirm who they are that shall obtain such and such degrees. They determine absolutely, and prescribe what glory shall belong to virgins, what shall be that of confessors, and what shall be that of martyrs. In a word, some are so puffed up with an high conceit of themselves, and of their meritorious acts, that they make an open profession of being of the number of such as shall obtain the highest degrees of glory and happiness.

But my opinion is, that the truth is to be found between these two extremes. I shall not prescribe a law to the consciences of any, in a matter whereof the decision is not absolutely necessary to salvation. Yet we may say, that in heaven there shall be divers degrees of glory and happiness; but we dare not describe them, nor venture to apply them to any person, or to tell who of us shall possess such and such degrees. This were a bold presumption against heaven, and

an attempt upon the forbidden fruit. Instead of being ver-viceable to others, we should wilfully lose ourselves. For such as are so audacious to search into the Divine Majesty, shall be swallowed up in his glory, Prov. xxv.

And though we verily believe degrees of glory, yet we may say, without offence to any person, that this belief is not to be established upon the forementioned passages, from whence we cannot make any such conclusion; for in St. John xiv. our Saviour saith not, that there are divers degrees of divine mansions, whereof some are richer and more glorious than others, but only, that in his Father's house there are many mansions. The meaning of our divine Saviour is clear as the day; he had an intent to raise up the drooping courage of his holy apostles, and to comfort them in his absence; for that purpose he assures them, that he was going to lodge in an house, where there was not only room for himself, but also for them, and for all that shall believe in him through their teaching. He expounds his words plainly in the xviith chapter of the same Gospel, where he speaks to God in this manner, "I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." For the other text in 1 Cor. xv. I beseech you, devout souls, read over the apostle's words; and consider, with a religious observation, what goes before, and what follows after. You shall find, that the apostle designs not to compare the saints the one with the other, but only to discover the difference which is between our bodies as they are in this corruptible and mortal life, and as they shall be when they shall have put on incorruption and immortality. Therefore, when he hath said, "There is one glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars, for one star differeth from another star in glory;" he doth not add likewise, So shall be the glory of one blessed person differing from another; but he saith, "So shall be the resurrection from the dead; the

the body is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

What is it therefore that may incline us to believe these divers degrees of glory and happiness?—I answer, First, The divers and different pains and punishments of the damned. For as in hell there shall be divers degrees of torments; likewise it is very probable, that in heaven there shall be divers degrees of happiness, and several degrees of glory. Secondly, God, to declare his divine wisdom, which is various in all things, bestows at present all his blessings and riches with a wonderful variety, and admirable order. Thus you may see in nature, that God hath scattered up and down the world divers gifts and excellencies. For example, the smell and beauty of the rose is different from that of the lily; the brightness of the diamond is not like that of the ruby; the light of the sun differs from that of the moon and stars. It is very probable, that above all the heavens, there shall be divers degrees of light and glory. Among the holy angels, there are distinctions of honour, and some dignities are named, Arch-angels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers. As therefore amongst the angels there are divers degrees of glory, it is also very probable, that the same order shall be observed amongst the glorified in heaven. Besides, as in the church militant the graces of God differ very much, so the souls of the faithful are not the same in all respects; they have different qualities and excellencies; there are in them divers degrees of light, of knowledge, of faith, hope, charity, and holiness. Likewise, according to the analogy of faith, there shall be also, in the church glorified, divers degrees of glory and happiness; and the rather, because glory is nothing else but the completion and perfection of grace. The reason is so much the stronger, because of the *parable of the talents*. Jesus Christ bestows upon his servants a glory proportionable

to the former riches of his grace. None can imagine, that the words relate to God's favours distributed to his children on earth; for our Lord speaks of that which he intends to do for them, when he shall come down from heaven to judge the world. The words relate to the time when he shall say to such as have well employed the talents of his mercy, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord." They relate also to the time when he shall cause the unprofitable servant "to be cast into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." I ought not to forget what we read on this subject, 2 Cor. ix. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." They are St. Paul's words, which expressly declare an inequality of glory and happiness to be expected amongst the rewards in heaven. It may be also worthy of our observation, that the felicities of heaven are represented to us by a feast, where all partake of the same meats, but some are advanced to a more honourable room than others. This, as I conceive, may be gathered from our Saviour's words, "Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit at table in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." It may also be understood from that other passage, where Lazarus is carried by the holy angels into Abraham's bosom. Lastly, I ground my opinion upon the xiith chapter of Daniel, where this blessed prophet, when he had spoken in general terms of the future happiness of the faithful, who shall rise to eternal life, he offers to mention some, on whom God hath bestowed more light upon earth, and whose ministry he hath made use of, to bring many souls to salvation; among these he seems to put divers degrees of glory: "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that bring many to righteousness, as the stars for ever." From this text one may apparently conclude, that as the light of the firmament differs much from that of the bright stars; and

as among the stars there is a diversity of light ; in like manner there shall be divers and different degrees of glory amongst the blessed in heaven.

Now, in answer to that argument, That Jesus Christ hath purchased for us the glory and happiness of heaven, that therefore this glory and happiness should be equal ; I confess this reason is weighty. I intend not absolutely to deny it ; but I shall offer several things to the consideration of the pious and devout souls, who shall peruse this treatise. First, That although the blood of Jesus Christ hath purchased for us heaven ; and that we are not able to claim it by our most regenerate actions, or merit it by our most painful sufferings and martyrdom ; because that when we have performed all that is commanded, our Saviour requires us to say, " We are unprofitable servants, because we have done nothing but what we are bound to do," Luke xvii. and because his holy apostle assures us, that " when all things are reckoned up, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us," Rom. viii. Nevertheless, God is so good, merciful, and bountiful, that he bears with our imperfections, and he rewards as a Father, with a free reward, all the good works of his servants, chiefly the works of charity. Therefore Jesus Christ tells his apostles, and generally all the faithful, " Whosoever shall give unto you to drink a cup of water, because you are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." And because it is the custom of the eastern people to warm their drink, therefore to give a cup of cold water may be reckoned the smallest assistance, our Saviour saith, " Whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones to drink a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward," Matt. x. If such as bestow a cup of cold water for God's sake, are rewarded in heaven, what may not those bountiful souls expect there, who now spend their estates in charitable deeds ?

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Besides, we have heard a prophet tell us, that all such as by the light of their doctrines, and the holiness of their lives, lead many souls to their salvation, shall shine for ever in heaven, as so many bright stars. It stands with reason; for if our Saviour will in his infinite mercy reward such a small kindness, as the gift of a draught of water to one of his children, they shall excel in glory, who spend for his sake, in his quarrel, every drop of their blood, and by their deaths confirm his holy gospel. This is a faithful saying, "If we die with Jesus Christ, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." But that which seems to me yet stronger, which makes for this purpose, is, that all these spiritual graces which are bestowed upon us in this life, proceed from the Holy Ghost, purchased for us by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his precious blood. Now these graces are different and various: therefore as there are divers degrees in grace, why should not there be also divers degrees of glory, since both have been purchased for us with the same price, by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The other argument, drawn from the happiness and perfection of the glorified, is rational, but not infallible. For several diamonds may be perfect in their kind, so that the clearest eye cannot take notice of any default; nevertheless they may differ in weight and price. All the stars have their perfection and light; nevertheless, one star differs from another star in glory. All the angels of heaven are perfectly happy and holy; and yet there is a great inequality amongst them in glory and dignity. Likewise, although all the blessed shall attain to a perfect holiness, in my judgment, that cannot hinder the diversity of degrees of glory and happiness.

I acknowledge also, that the other objection, drawn from these words, "The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," is not to be despised, but it concludes nothing

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to the purpose. For if you should cut out excellently well some orbs of crystal, of different sizes, some greater, some less, and should put them all in the sun, they would be all full of light in every part, everyone would represent the beautiful image of that sun that looks upon them ; so that it may be very well said of them all, that they shine as the sun. Nevertheless, according to their brightness and size, they receive more light, and the sun seems greater in the one than the other. To the other objection, That all the glorified in heaven are named kings ; I answer, that it is not to be understood in a literal sense, no more than when it is said, that they had on their heads crowns of gold. That I may continue in the same comparison, I may say, That all kings have a sovereign majesty, which acknowledges none above it but God, from whom it proceeds ; and nevertheless some have a greater power and riches than others. Likewise all the glorified saints shall enjoy a sovereign and perfect happiness, and receive it immediately from God ; but this cannot hinder them from differing from one another in glory. I answer next, The other argument, taken out of the parable of the father of the family, who at the evening of the day rewarded equally all his labourers, that had been employed in his vineyard, giving to every one of them a penny. That parables are as pictures ; in which, besides the thing intended to be drawn, there are many particulars, which serve but as flourishes to adorn the pieces. If we should consider every particular of this parable, we might conclude from hence, that, amongst such as shall be saved, there shall be some murmuring against God, who shall envy their companions ; which is a gross absurdity to imagine. The design of our Saviour is not to speak of the equality of the glorified saints ; but his intent is to shew, that those whom God calls first, should not despise the others ; because God, who doth with his own what he pleaseth, is able to make them equal, and to bestow upon them the same advantages. Lastly, As every one whom the good man of the

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the house sent into his vineyard at several times of the day received for their salary a penny; in the same manner, whosoever God calls into his church effectually at any time, nay, at the hour of death, they shall receive from his infinite bounty, eternal life; but from hence we cannot conclude any thing contrary to this truth, that in heaven there shall be divers degrees of glory.

The greatest difficulty, in my judgment, is in this allegation, "That we shall see God face to face;" and that he will be "all in all," 1 Cor. xiii. xv. Nevertheless we may say, that as all the damned in hell shall lose all sight of God, yet that cannot hinder the divers degrees of pain and torment: likewise, all the glorified in heaven shall see God; but this sight, which all enjoy, cannot remove the inequality of their glory and happiness. As when all men look upon the same sun, but several receive the benefit of its beams in a different manner: thus we shall all behold the same God; but the gracious aspect of his countenance shall be cast upon us variously, and produce in us divers effects. We may also make use of another comparison: as when we cast many empty vessels into the same sea, they are filled up; so that it may be said of them, that the sea is in them all; yet some may be more capacious, and receive more water than others: likewise all the saints shall enter into the same wonderful ocean of the Godhead, and they shall be all filled up to the brim with his glorious presence; so that God shall be *all in all*. Nevertheless, we shall receive different measures of the waters issuing forth to eternal life. In a word, as God will cast headlong all the reprobates into the same lake of fire and brimstone, yet there shall be divers degrees amongst them of punishments; so God shall cause all the elect to drink out of the same river of pleasure, but there shall be a difference amongst their degrees of glory. Moreover, this passage may be thus understood, "God shall be all in all;" that is to say, he

he shall be to us all riches, glory, light, meat, drink, pleasure, &c. In my judgment, we cannot conclude from hence, that he is to be in all equally.

If any have other thoughts, or is of another opinion, I shall not offer to condemn him, nor undertake to contradict him: For I conceive, that since Almighty God hath hid the glories and happiness of heaven, and covered them over with a thick cloud, on purpose to limit our too curious inquiry, we cannot mention them with too much modesty and respect. Only I must make another remark for the comfort of devout souls, whose thoughts and minds are in heaven; that when we affirm, that there shall be different degrees of glory in paradise, we must not fancy that this shall be any prejudice to the perfect happiness of the glorified. For if I may once again make use of the comparison of the sun-beams, and of the waters of the sea, I cannot find any more proper for the purpose. As all eyes that look upon the clear sun, without cloud or mist, receive its rays in a different manner; yet they have all light enough to see to guide themselves, and to rejoice in this beautiful light that enlightens them; if some take in a greater measure of that light, this hinders not the rest from enjoying also a sufficiency: so shall it be with all the glorified souls, when they shall behold God the Father of lights, the true Sun that shall shine for ever and ever. If any of them shall have more or less of light, that shall not concern or prejudice their sovereign happiness, for every one of them shall enjoy as much as they shall be able to contain, or shall be necessary to complete their joy, and perfect their happiness. And as when we cast into the sea many empty vessels, some greater, some less, the greater contains more water, and the lesser not so much; yet they all receive enough to be filled up to the brim. If the least of these vessels had the knowledge to speak, they would not complain of the greater, for containing more than they, because they have all as much as they can either desire or

expect ; likewise when the saints shall be admitted into the bottomless sea of glory and happiness, they shall be filled all up to the brim, so that they shall not be able to desire any more. They shall be all, according to their different capacities, perfectly and entirely happy. Consider therefore, christian soul, that if thou enjoyest so much satisfaction and delight as thou art capable of, although others may have something more, thou art no less happy for their overplus. There is none but God alone, who, according to the infiniteness of his Being, possesseth an unmeasurable and infinite glory and happiness. This bottomless source of glory and bliss shall for ever and ever overflow all the glorified in heaven, and satisfy their souls with unspeakable delights.

You may ask, Christians, In what part of the great world shall God cause us to enjoy so many rare pleasures, and heavenly contentments ? Where shall he discover so much glory and splendour ? In what part doth he intend to shew so many divine marks of his gracious presence ?—I answer, That this place is above the elemental world, above all the heavens, that appear before our eyes, and that roll about us. If we will understand this, we must remember that the holy scripture makes mention of three heavens. The first is the large extent of the air, distinguished by the learned into three regions. In this sense it is to be understood when it speaks of the birds of the air. The second heaven comprehends the heavenly spheres, the globes that are between the moon and the firmament, where are all the fixed stars, (and if beyond this there be any other sphere,) whereof the motion is so powerful and swift as to carry with it the inferior globes, and to cause them to roll round in the space of four-and-twenty hours. Of this heaven David speaks in Psalm xix. “ The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work ; he hath put in them a tabernacle for the sun.” Now, above all these heavenly spheres mentioned

tioned by the astronomers (some reckon up nine or ten, others more,) there is yet a third heaven spoken of by St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. "I know, (saith he,) a man in Christ, which was taken up into the third heaven; I know that he was taken up into paradise, and heard words which cannot be spoken, which are not possible for man to utter." The holy apostle leaves no manner of difficulty; for the third heaven he names paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, which are not possible to be uttered.

The celestial globes roll about continually; but this third heaven, for its excellency, is styled, *the heaven*; and is fixed in an eternal settlement. And as much as these beautiful orbs have a greater light and glory than the air, and the inferior bodies; so much the more doth this third heaven excel them. It is my judgment that Solomon means this third heaven situate above all the rest, which exceeds them so much in beauty and glory, when he speaks to God "of the heavens, and of the heaven of heavens," 1 Kings viii. that is to say, the most excellent, the highest, and the most glorious of all the heavens, *are not able to contain thee*; and God himself declares by his holy prophets, "the heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool," Isa. lxvi. For in this high heaven God hath placed his throne, where he discovers his glory, and the brightness of his luminous countenance. There the seraphims fly, and thousand thousands worship him, and ten thousand millions stand continually before him, Isa. vi. Dan. vii. Here the blessed soul of our Saviour Christ ascended as soon as it had left the body, according to what he promised the crucified thief, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. Into this place our glorious Saviour entered, both in soul and body, after his resurrection; and here it was that St. Stephen saw him, when he cried out, "I see the heavens open, and Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of God," Acts vii. And to this place the souls of all

such as die in his favour are carried up. Therefore St. Paul to the Hebrews mentions, immediately after the thousands of angels, "the spirits of just men made perfect; and the church and congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven." In short, it is the glorious seat, where we hope that God will receive us both in soul and body, at that day when we shall be taken up into the air, above the clouds of heaven, to be for ever with the Lord Jesus.

Some inquire, What shall become then of this elemental world? Whether this heaven that appears to our eyes, and this earth that sustains us, shall perish? Or whether they shall remain yet after the great day of doom?—Certain profane atheists are persuaded, that the world shall remain for ever, as it doth at present, and that there shall be no kind of alteration. The apostle St. Peter hath prophesied of their persons, and described them in their own colours; "There shall come at the last day mockers, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers are asleep, all things continue in the same manner, since the beginning of the world." I need not trouble myself to answer such impieties: I speak to none but to devout souls, who reverence the divinity of the holy scriptures, and are fully persuaded of the truth of all the articles of our creed.

When men oppose a false doctrine, they often run from one extremity to another. Therefore some imagine, that the world shall totally perish; and that as God hath made the heavens and earth, and the rest of the elements, out of nothing, he will reduce them all again into the same nothing; and that he intends to create others, more beautiful, more holy, and far more glorious. There are two sorts of expressions that seem to favour this opinion. The first speaks of the heavens and of the earth, as of perishing and decaying creatures. In this manner David discourseth of them in
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Psa. cii. After him the apostle to the Hebrews, Thou, Lord, hast established the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; they shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed." And our Saviour tells us, in Matt. xxiv. "The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." Especially the words of St. Peter, in the 2d epistle, and in the third chapter, are remarkable, "The heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall melt with heat; and the earth, with the works that are within, shall be burnt up." The other passages mention new heavens, and a new earth, as in Isa. lxv. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former things shall be remembered no more." Likewise, in 2 Pet. iii. before-mentioned, "We look for new heavens and a new earth, according to his promise, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And Rev. xxi. "I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Moreover St. Paul to the Hebrews, speaks of the *world to come*. From hence some conclude, that the old world ought to be abolished, and that God will create a new world.

There is no man, that is a Christian, can doubt of that wonderful change which shall happen to the world at the last day, if he considers the fore-mentioned passages of holy scripture, especially that of St. Peter, "The heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall melt with heat; and the earth, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." As the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of the priests' trumpets; so this great world shall be turned upside down at the blowing of the archangel's trumpet. Our reason alone, being enlightened by divine revelation, seems to confirm this truth; for since the house infected with a spreading leprosy was to be demolished, how much rather ought the world

to be destroyed, because in it are to be seen apparently the spots and blemishes of sin, the spiritual leprosy !

But though this great fabric of the world must be ruined, and turned upside down, we do not believe that it shall be reduced to nothing. Its qualities shall be changed, and, it may be, its form shall be altered ; but its substance and matter shall continue always the same. For, first, as God hath created the world for his own glory, he cannot be for ever disappointed of the intent of his creation. And because this world hath not glorified him as it ought, he will put it into a condition proper to glorify him, answerable to the purpose for which he drew it out of nothing. Secondly, Since this world was created to serve man, as a looking-glass, to behold the eternal power of God ; and that this beautiful looking-glass hath been spotted and sullied by sin ; it is yet possible to cleanse it, and make it brighter, that it might represent its Creator better, and shew forth a more perfect image of his Divine Majesty. Thirdly, Since God doth nothing in vain, there is no likelihood that he should destroy the world totally, and reduce the primitive matter to nothing, from whence it was drawn, to create new matter, because he is able of this old matter to make a new earth, and new heaven, as pure and undefiled as if the matter had been newly created. Fourthly, Sin hath spoiled and disfigured the works of the creation, but it hath not touched either the first matter, or its being ; so that God can take away this defilement, and remove this deformity, without touching the matter, which of itself is innocent. In man, the little world, and the compendium of the great, I find a beautiful and perfect image of that which God will do with the whole world. God intends not to destroy the substance of souls, but only to purge them from all vicious qualities, and beautify them with righteousness and true holiness ; so that they shall be as the angels of heaven. Likewise he intends not to destroy the substance of our bodies ; but
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he will free them from corruption, from death, and clothe them with glory and immortality; so that this vile body shall be rendered conformable to the glorious body of the Son of God, and shall shine as the sun. So God will not altogether destroy the world, and abolish its substance, but he will rectify all its imperfections, and add to it a greater glory. If it be lawful for me to discover here all my thoughts, I must say, that I put a greater difference between heaven and earth; for the earth is altogether corrupt, and spoiled with sin; it is the earth chiefly that groans under the burden of so many iniquities, which reign in it; but if heaven is guilty of any crime, it is because it hath given light to such as have been rebels against the Divine Majesty, and assisted the cursed earth by its favourable influences. Because of this great difference, it is my opinion, that the earth shall be destroyed by fire; and that all its beautiful buildings, and proud palaces, shall be turned into ashes. But the change which shall happen in heaven, shall only be to make it more beautiful and brighter, that the children of God may have there a more glorious palace. This seems to have been typified in the ceremonial law; for as we have already observed, speaking of that which shall happen to the soul and body, that when an earthen vessel was defiled, it was to be broken to pieces; but such vessels as were of a more precious metal, as of brass, or of silver, or of gold, were to be purified with fire; likewise the earth, with all its works, shall pass through the flames, so that it shall lose its present shape and qualities. But heaven, that is as brass, or rather as fine silver, shall only be purified by the fire of the last judgment. If you remove the cause, you take away also the effect; if you remove away sin, you also remove its punishment. Now it is because of man's sin, that the world hath and shall see so great a change. Therefore as God, by his infinite mercy, hath forgiven man's sin, it is also to be expected from the same mercy, that he will not totally destroy the world, but that he will rather free it from corruption, unto which our sin hath made it subject.

Unless God deals in this manner, our joy and comfort seems not complete, and God appears not perfectly satisfied and reconciled. While a subject continues in rebellion, and in the displeasure of his prince, not only his person is pursued and punished, but all that belongs to him bear the marks of wrath and indignation of the prince whom he hath offended. His dwelling-house is commonly pulled down, his woods are cut and mangled, and his inheritance is destroyed. But when he has made his peace, his house is built up again, all signs of the king's displeasure are taken away, and every thing appears with a more pleasant countenance. Thus because of our rebellion, and our treason against God, he hath punished the world for our sakes, and hath made it sensible of his wrath. But now that our peace is made, or rather, God having made peace by the blood of his Son, we may justly expect that he will remove all signs of his displeasure and revenge. I remember, upon this subject, what David said to God, when he saw the angel destroying Jerusalem; "I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?" 2 Sam. xxiv. In the same manner every believer may say to God, Lo, I have sinned, O Lord; I and my brethren have done wickedly: but these inanimate creatures, what have they done? Our sins have defiled the earth: and all that may be objected against heaven, is, to have yielded light and assistance to us rebels. Since therefore thou didst blot out our sins, and pardon our rebellions, spare these harmless creatures, which cannot be punished for our sakes.

At present we may, without difficulty, understand the fore-mentioned passages of holy scripture, and such as tend to the same purpose. For when David and St. Paul assures us, "That the heavens shall perish, and they shall be changed as a garment;" I answer, 'That they shall perish in respect of their qualities, but not of their substance; and that the change shall not be as when one garment is cast off, and another taken;

taken; but as when the spots and blemishes of an old garment are taken away, and it becomes a fresher. When your clothing is grown old, and worn out, if it were in your power to make it become new again, and as beautiful as ever it was, you would never think of seeking for new stuff. "That which is impossible to men, is possible with God," Luke vi. And when our Saviour, in St. Matthew's Gospel, saith, "That the heavens and the earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away;" I might affirm that these words are to be understood comparatively, that is to say, that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, rather than that the words of God should fail of an accomplishment. Our Saviour confirms this interpretation, when he saith, in St. Luke's Gospel, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than that one tittle of the law should not be fulfilled." The holy scripture is full of such kind of expressions; but I would rather stick to the answers which I have already given in the former text, and say, that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, not in regard of their substance, but only in regard of their qualities and accidents that belong to them.

In St. Peter's expressions, I find a double comparison or allusion; the one relates to the tents that are pulled down when the pieces are taken asunder. This comparison is very proper; for this world is like a great *tabernacle*, a *glorious pavilion*. God shall pull off the coverings, he shall cut the cords, and separate every piece. But he will one day raise it up again, gather every piece, and make it a *royal tabernacle*, full of splendour and glory.

The other comparison is borrowed from goldsmiths, who cast the gold and metals into pots, and then melt them in the fire. Now as they destroy not by this means the gold and the silver, but they cleanse them from the dross and the froth, causethem to appear in all their brightness and beauty,

and give them a new shape and form ; so the fire of the last judgment shall not consume the heavens and the earth, but shall only give them a new form and beauty.

The strongest objection, in my opinion, is occasioned by the words of St. Peter, "The earth, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt." But I answer to this, That there is a great difference between burning, and being totally consumed and abolished. If it were in the power of a man, whose house is consumed to the ground, to raise it up again from its ruins, and to make it more beautiful and glorious than before, by his word alone, he would never seek for other materials. Now shall I say again, that what is impossible with men is possible with God ? He hath already created the world with his word, and he is able to restore it again by the same word. Art hath found means to make beautiful vessels of melting ashes ; and shall not God's hand, unto which all the skill of art and the strength of nature cannot be compared, be able to gather up the ashes of the earth, and to make of it a body full of glory and light ?

From hence you may perceive, how we are to understand that there shall be new heavens, and a new earth ; they shall not be new in regard of their substance and matter, which shall have been from the beginning of the world, but they shall be new in regard of those noble qualities which God shall give them. When a debauched fellow leaves his wicked life, and applies himself to the practice of piety and virtue, we commonly say, That he is not the same, but that he is become another man. Besides, when a man hath cast off his old rags, and put on a magnificent garment, we are wont to say, that he is another man. We shall have much more cause to declare, that the heavens and the earth shall be new, when God shall have renewed them. In short, he shall enrich the world with so many wonderful beauties, he shall fill

fill it full of so much glory and excellency, he shall cause it to be so perfect, that we shall have just reason to look upon it as upon a new world, and to say with the apostle, "The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." I would not have you think, Christians, that this opinion is grounded only upon human reason. It is drawn from the words of St. Paul, who, speaking of the earthly and insensible creatures, as may appear by his design, he saith not only, "that they are subject to vanity, not willingly, but because of him who hath subjected them;" he understands man, who by his sin and rebellion hath spoiled the world, and corrupted nature; but he adds immediately after, "That they hope to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, to be in the glorious liberty of the children of God;" afterwards he saith, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now;" and before he saith, "That the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Son of God." In which words, pray take notice, that St. Paul saith not, that these creatures shall be abolished, and totally destroyed; but only that they shall be delivered from vanity, and from the bondage of corruption, unto which the sin of man hath made them subject; and that this blessed deliverance shall be brought to pass at the day of the redemption of our bodies, that is to say, at that day when God shall redeem our bodies from their graves, and raise them up to the highest glory and happiness, which hath been prepared for us from the creation of the world.

Then shall happen that which is wont to be seen at the marriage of a great king, or at a coronation, or a triumph. For not only the prince and his spouse, and all the court, appear in their richest and most glorious attire, and loaden with their most precious jewels, and the usual pomp of triumphs is as extraordinary and glorious as can be contrived; but on such occasions, the prince's palace is adorned with the richest,

with the most magnificent and rarest ornaments ; and the town where this solemnity is kept, shews forth some signs of the public rejoicing. Many places are beautified with several rarities ; theatres are erected, and triumphal arches ; the streets are covered with flowers and tapestry ; fires are kindled, and torches are lighted ; and there is no corner but shews some expressions of the public joy. Thus when our Lord Jesus Christ shall come down from the clouds of heaven, upon a chariot of triumph, when he shall come to consummate his marriage, and to crown his spouse, he shall not only appear in his greatest glory, and most divine pomp, but the church also, his spouse, shall be clothed with a garment brighter than the sun, and crowned with an immortal glory. All the blessed saints shall appear in their attire of joy, having palms in their hands, and crowns upon their heads ; and the companies of holy angels shall sing round about. At that time paradise, which shall be his palace and bride-chamber, shall be adorned and enriched with all the light and glory which I have already essayed to describe to you. The whole world also, and every part of it, shall partake of this great glory, and celestial pomp. The richest coronations, and the most magnificent triumphs, the most stately nuptials, are gone in a few hours. Therefore the fires of joy are soon put out, the hangings of the streets are taken down, and the arches and pageants disappear, and the city is to be seen in its wonted dress. But as this glory and joy of the church shall never end, there the world shall for ever and ever bear the signs of it. The ornaments which it shall receive in this joyful day, shall never be taken away, and the celestial fires of gladness shall never go out.

Although it is my opinion, that the world shall never be totally destroyed, but that it shall become more beautiful and glorious than before, I shall not undertake to give you a description of its several parts, nor to tell you how it shall be employed.

employed. For example, I shall not determine whether we are to understand our Saviour's words in the gospel literally, "That the sun shall become dark, and the moon shall not give its light, and that the stars shall fall from heaven;" or whether these heavenly bodies shall still continue; whether they shall be decked with a new light and glory, and to what purpose they shall serve. For then we shall be enlightened with a greater light than that of the heavenly bodies. I shall only propose two things: First, That as in the human bodies there are some members which at present are useful, but then they shall be only for ornament and beauty; likewise in the great world, there are many things which shall then be of no use; nevertheless, they shall be preserved for the beauty and perfection of the world. Secondly, That as man, the little world, shall then be more beautiful and perfect than when God first created him; likewise this great world shall receive more beauty, more ornaments and perfection, than when God drew it out of its first *chaos*. As much difference as there is between the second Adam and the first, between the heavenly paradise and the earthly, so much shall there be between the first and the second world. So that we shall have good cause to say of this great palace, which is to be destroyed, and reared up again by the mighty hand of God, as the holy prophet said of Solomon's temple, which we have already applied to our glorified bodies, "The glory of this second house shall be greater than the glory of the first."

Some inquire whether we shall know one another in this state of eternal glory and happiness? I mean, whether the subject shall know his prince and king? whether the sheep shall know their pastor, and the pastor his sheep? whether the father shall know his son, and the son the father; the husband his wife, and the wife her husband, and so forth?

Though this question is of the number of such as are more
curious

curious than needful to be known ; nevertheless, an answer seems to carry with it some kind of comfort and satisfaction. I should judge, that this treatise would not be perfect, if I did not say something to this noble subject. But what I shall say, shall be with the same moderation and reservedness as I have expressed in answering to the former questions. For although what I shall speak seems to me very plain, and without difficulty, others may have a different opinion, without any prejudice to their salvation. However, I may affirm for an infallible truth, that the glory of heaven, as well as grace, shall bring nature to perfection, but shall not destroy it. It shall add to it other excellencies, but it shall not take away those that it hath already. It shall not abolish any of the faculties, but it shall beautify and enrich them with new ornaments. Therefore, consequently, it shall not take away our memory, which is one of the rarest gifts and abilities of the reasonable soul.

I confess that it is said, "That the former things shall be remembered no more, and that they shall come no more into our mind." But this is to be understood of the evils and calamities of this present life : and we are not to understand the words so, that we shall totally forget all the former evils and miseries, and shall not remember to have suffered them. St. John saith the contrary, when he represents the angel opening the fifth seal ; that he saw under the golden altar, which was before the throne of God, the souls of them who had been martyred for the word of God, and for the testimony of the truth, crying out with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood upon the inhabitants of the earth?" I confess these words may be understood in a figurative sense, as when God saith to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood cries from the earth unto me;" and as St. Paul saith, "That the blood of Jesus Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel." However, from hence

we may conclude, that the remembrance of the calamities and persecutions which we have endured in this life, is not inconsistent with happiness. This remembrance is so far from prejudicing our felicity, that on the contrary, it shall increase and enlarge it, and cause us to relish it the more. When the prophet saith, "That the former things shall be remembered no more, and they shall never come to mind;" he understands, that the former evils shall never be felt, and that we shall be for ever sheltered from all miseries and misfortunes.

I cannot express this by a nobler and more proper example than that of Joseph: when he went out of prison to take the government of Egypt, and had strengthened himself by a rich alliance in marriage, he named his eldest son Manasseh, which signifies *forgetfulness* or *forgetful*; for he said, "God hath made me forget all my labour, and my father's house;" although this holy man had not altogether forgotten those things; for he knew afterwards his brethren, and told them of the mischief which they had intended against him, and which God had turned to good. But he spoke in this manner, because God had changed his misery and imprisonment into glory and honour. In this sense we are to understand these words, "The former things shall be remembered no more;" because, instead of the evils and miseries which we endure here below, we shall enter into an eternal glory and happiness. The prophet expounds himself sufficiently in the next words; for when he had said, "The former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind;" he adds immediately after, "Be glad and rejoice in that which I create." The Holy Ghost confirms us in this interpretation in another place, in these words, "All tears shall be wiped off from our eyes; there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; but eternal joy and gladness shall be upon our heads."

Since God intends not to destroy those gifts and abilities,
which

which he had bestowed upon us in this life, much less shall he abolish our knowledge, which is one of the brightest beams of glory. This knowledge shall be so far from diminishing or decaying, that it shall then increase more and more, until it comes to the highest perfection. As the air loseth nothing of its twilight at break of day, when the sun riseth upon our heads; but it rather loseth all obscurity and darkness, which the presence of the sun draws away, until it be perfectly enlightened; likewise our understanding shall lose nothing of that light and perfection which it receives now from the breaking of the day of God's grace. But as the Sun of Righteousness riseth upon it more and more in joy and salvation, it shall perfectly lose all darkness and ignorance by degrees, until it be fully enlightened. From hence we may probably conclude, that we shall know all the persons in heaven, whom we have known here on earth. For if the glorified shall remember the wicked, who have tormented them, they must needs remember all believers, who have bestowed on them their alms, and done them good. If it were otherwise, the apostle St. Paul would not tell the Corinthians, "We are your glory, as also you are our's, at the day of the Lord Jesus." And he would not write thus to the Thessalonians, "What is our hope, our joy, and our crown of glory? Is it not you before the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Verily, you are our glory and our joy." Now, if in the state of glory St. Paul should not know the Corinthians and Thessalonians, unto whom he had preached the gospel, how shall they be his joy, his glory, and his crown, at the coming of the Lord Jesus? This reason seems to me as clear as the sun. Nevertheless, I cannot affirm, that in heaven we shall know again them whom we have known upon earth, by the features of their countenance; for there shall be a wonderful alteration. The faces of all the saints shall be beautiful, so perfect, and full of light and glory, that the most knowing shall not be able to judge them to be the same whom we have seen upon earth.

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Some therefore fancy that we shall know one another by the assistance of our discourse. But our voice shall then be changed as well as our countenance ; and it is doubtful whether we shall discourse of the former things which happened on earth ; for our chief employment shall be to behold God's face, and to sing forth his praises. I had rather therefore affirm, that we shall know one another by an infused knowledge, by which we shall know all things which are possible to be known, and by the light of that glory with which God shall fill our souls. In short, this knowledge shall proceed from no other principle than that of all the knowledge with which we shall be crowned in that state of glory and perfection.

I am therefore more than fully persuaded, that we shall know in heaven our parents and our friends, and generally all the persons whom we have known here below. But we shall also perfectly know them whom we never knew in the world, and never saw with the eyes of the flesh. We shall know the holy and blessed Virgin Mary, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the confessors, the martyrs, and generally, without exception, all the saints, who shall be crowned with glory and joy in heaven. There is nobody can question, but that, in the celestial paradise, we shall have more knowledge and understanding, than ever Adam had in the earthly. Now when God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, when he took one of his ribs, and formed therewith a woman, he had seen none of this done ; nevertheless, when his eyes were open, he knew her. Therefore he declared his judgment in this manner, "This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." And shall not we, when God shall rouse us up from the deep sleep of death, with the sound of the last trumpet, know the spouse of the Son of God, which he hath drawn out of his side, and moulded with his own precious blood ? St. Peter, when he was enlightened by a beam of our Saviour's glory in his transfiguration, knew

Moses and Elias, whom he had never seen before. And shall not we know all the children of God upon Mount Sion; when we shall be transfigured ourselves; and that we shall shine as the heavenly light, whereof that of Mount Tabor was but an imperfect shadow and representation? But tho' we shall know in heaven all the persons whom we have known on earth, we shall look upon them in another manner, and love them with another affection; for all that we have of the animal and earthly life shall be totally abolished; and as our knowledge shall be clear and certain, our love shall be pure and heavenly. I am not able to express this better than St. Paul doth in these words, "Although I have known Christ according to the flesh, nevertheless I know him no more according to the flesh." Christians, consider well these expressions; they will be able to remove all difficulty and doubts out of your minds. We are fully persuaded, that all the inhabitants of heaven shall know very well our Lord Jesus Christ; for how can it be otherwise, but that we must know this glorious Monarch of men and of angels, whose sacred countenance shall shine as the sun, and who shall sit upon his magnificent throne, about which legions of seraphims fly, and who shall be there adored for ever by all the church of glory? Nevertheless, St. Paul saith, "That although he hath known Jesus Christ according to the flesh;" that is to say, according to the manner of his low and earthly life, when he lived here on earth; at present he did not know him in the same manner, he did not consider him otherwise, but as he is at present invested with an unspeakable glory and splendour. In the same manner, although we shall know all them whom we have known on earth, we shall no more know them according to the flesh, that is to say, according to this animal and sensual life; our love shall have nothing earthly or carnal, but it shall be altogether spiritual and heavenly.

I beseech you, Christians, consider well what St. Matthew tells

tells us in chap. xxi. The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Christ to entangle him with this difficult question, "Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren; the first, when he had married a wife, deceased; and having no issue, left his wife unto his brethren; likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh; and last of all the woman died also; therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her?" Our Saviour answers not, That this woman shall belong to none of those husbands, because they shall not know her, nor distinguish her from other women; but he replies to them, "You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven." From hence we may conclude, that although in heaven we shall know one another, we shall have nothing of that carnal love which we have at present, and which causeth us to put so much difference between one person and another. A father may know his children, but his love shall not be grounded upon considerations of flesh and blood; he shall love them only, because they are amongst the children of God, and the heirs of the kingdom, and because he shall appear in the image of the heavenly Father, clothed with his light, and crowned with his immortal glory. Finally, We shall love nothing but in God and for his sake, as they shall be in God, and God in them. In this manner it shall not be possible to love them more or less; charity or love, the queen of virtues, shall then sit upon his throne, and attain to the highest degree of perfection.

If you think seriously upon this, Christians, you shall find arguments to answer the vain objections of such as say, That if we come to the knowledge of one another in heaven, that will be able to disturb us of our satisfaction. For as it is a
comfort

comfort and joy to meet there with our parents and friends ; in like manner, it will be a trouble and affliction, not to find there all such whom we have formerly loved. We may form and retort the same objection, with more reason, against those who believe that we shall not know one another in heaven. For we may say also, that not knowing the persons, we shall not know whether our parents, or our friends, are there : and this is likely to disturb and trouble the quiet and satisfaction of our minds. But to argue in this gross manner, is to confound heaven with the earth.

Grief and displeasure can never be admitted in a paradise of joy and perfect happiness. In this glorious condition, our knowledge shall be so clear, our charity so pure, our love to God so fervent, that as we shall love all things which God shall love, and where his image shall appear ; so it shall not be possible for us to love them whom God shall hate, them who shall bear the marks and characters of the devil.

When David was yet here upon earth, he saith unto God, " Lord, do I not hate them that hate thee ? I hate them with a perfect hatred ; they have been to me as mine enemies," Psa. cxxxix. In the same manner we shall rather speak in heaven, in the state of perfection, when God shall be in us *all in all*, and we shall be all in God. Some there are that inquire, What kind of language we shall speak in heaven ? Some reply, That we shall speak the language of angels ; grounding their opinion upon what St. Paul says to the Corinthians, " Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

But this is a fantastical opinion ; for as the angels are pure spirits, they can have no tongue, nor proper language. I confess, in some holy apparitions, angels have spoken to men ; but it was by moving the tongues of their borrowed bodies,

bodies, or by employing some other corporal organ. Then they spoke in the language of those to whom they were sent, and had no particular or proper dialect. But if angels did speak, their language would excel as much that of men, as the angelical nature excels the human. By the tongues of angels, therefore, our apostle understands, an excellent tongue better than that of men.

Others fancy, that in heaven we shall speak no other language but the Hebrew, because, say they, that it is the tongue which God hath sanctified from the beginning of the world, in which he spoke to the patriarchs and holy prophets; in which he proclaimed his law upon Mount Sinai, in the audience of all the people of Israel, and in which he hath recorded his sacred law with his own finger. They say that 'tis the language which Adam spoke in the earthly paradise, in the state of innocency, and which all the inhabitants of the world made use of before God sent among them a division of tongues. And we may also affirm, that 'twas the language used by our Saviour while he was on earth. For the Syriac, which he commonly spoke as the rest of the Jews, is a dialect of the Hebrew, or a kind of corrupted Hebrew. Others are yet of opinion, that as then we shall attain to all the knowledge and sciences, we shall not be ignorant of any kind of languages, but that with them we shall declare the wonderful works of God, as the apostles at the day of Pentecost. As the holy scripture is silent upon the matter, I shall affirm nothing.

But in general terms I may declare, that as God caused a division of tongues to punish man's insolence and pride; and as the different languages of people is an effect of their sin, 'tis more certain, that this confusion and difference shall be altogether taken away, and that nothing shall be said in heaven but shall be very well understood by all the glorified saints. I may add, moreover, that in case we should speak so well all
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manner of languages which have been in the world, 'tis nevertheless very likely that we shall all speak but one language, that we may all praise God with the same voice. But whether this shall be the holy language, or another more perfect and majestic, which God shall sanctify for this purpose, we cannot know until God of his infinite mercy shall have raised us to this state of glory and perfect happiness. From what we have already said, Christians, you may easily understand, that our happiness hath three steps or degrees; the first is attainable in this life; the second at the egress of the soul out of the body; the third is at the great day of our glorious resurrection. For already in this life God bestows upon us the first-fruits of his glory, and the foretastes of his paradise. The Spirit of God, and of his glory, rests at present upon us, which fills us full of an unspeakable glorious joy, and with the peace of God which passeth all understanding. When our souls depart out of this wretched and infirm body, God gathers them up into the bundle of life; he introduceth them into the blessed company of the angels and glorified spirits, and admits them to the contemplation of his face, which is fulness of joy. But in this day of triumph, when Christ shall come down from heaven to judge the quick and the dead, he will advance us, both in soul and body, to the highest glory and happiness whereof we are capable. For this reason the name of glory is ascribed to the highest degree of happiness which is promised to us at the blessed appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the viiith chap. to the Romans, where the apostle saith, "That the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And in the iiid chap. to the Colossians, he saith, "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, you shall appear also with him in glory." Therefore this glorious appearing is styled a *blessed hope*;

hope; that is to say, the fulfilling and accomplishment of all that we expect or hope for; as in the iid chap. to Titus, St. Paul saith, "We expect the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God, who is the Saviour Jesus Christ."

Then shall be the consummation of the glory of the Head and members; for then the Son of God shall cause the damned to feel that almighty power which he possesseth in heaven and earth, and in the depth. He shall discover himself to the faithful, in his greatest glory and most divine splendour. Therefore this glorious day of his descent from heaven, with the angels of his power, is mentioned as the first day of his *manifestation*, of his *appearing*, and of his *kingdom*. For this cause, when the Holy Ghost speaks of this day, he styles it "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," "the day of our Lord Jesus;" as also, "the day of the Lord, and the day of God." As it shall be the day of the Lord Jesus, it shall also be our day. Therefore St. Paul calls it, "The day of our redemption," because that in this day our Lord shall redeem our bodies out of their graves, and shall bestow upon both our souls and bodies, all the fruits of the redemption which he hath purchased for us with his blood, Rom. viii. and shall raise us up to the highest glory, and most perfect happiness, Heb. ix. 'Tis the happy day of consummation of our marriage with the divine Lamb. 'Tis the day of our joy and triumph with the glorified men and angels. 'Tis the day of our coronation, and of our entrance into our kingdom, when the King of kings, and Lord of lords, shall crown us with his own hand, and put us in possession of an empire prepared for us in the beginning of the world. In a word, 'tis the day when we shall come to the Lord Jesus, and be with him, as he with the Father, that we may be all in one.

Because of the glorious and wonderful things that shall come to pass on this day, 'tis named, *The great day*. St. Jude calls it thus: When he speaks of the revolted angels, he saith,
 "That

“That God hath reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” In this manner many understand the words of St. John, when he describes the foul spirits, and likens them to frogs that he saw coming out of the dragon’s mouth, and of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, and saith, “They are the spirits of the devil working miracles, which God sent forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty,” Rev. xvi.

Lastly, This glorious day is not only called “the day of judgment, the day of the Lord, the day of our redemption,” and *the great day*, but oft-times, without any addition, is styled *the day*, and *that day*; as Heb. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.” In the epistle to the Thessalonians, “You are not in darkness, that that day should surprise you.” Thus in the 2d epistle to Timothy, and 1st chapter, St. Paul saith, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” And when he remembers the good and charitable deeds of Onesiphorus, he prays for him in this manner, “The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day;” and in the ivth chap. speaking of himself, he saith, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.”

It is so styled because of its excellency; it is the day of days, the end of all the seasons, the consummation of all ages and times; after this there shall be no more alteration of days, months, and years. Therefore an angel is represented in

the Revelations, lifting up his hands to heaven, swearing by the living God who hath created heaven and all things therein, the earth and all things in it, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be no more time. For instead of this unconstant time, which flies away without leaving any sign of its being, an everlasting eternity shall succeed; an eternity always the same, always blessed with happiness, always glorious and joyful. This divine and magnificent day shall begin at the end of other days, but shall never draw to an end. Therefore St. Peter in these words calls it an eternal day, or eternity, 2 Pet. iii. "Glory be to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both now and for ever," *Amen*. And in expectation of this day of days, all creatures are groaning and travailing in pain until now; but especially believers, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan in themselves, desiring with an earnest and holy desire to see the breaking of the great and glorious day. It is the end of all the prophecies, and the accomplishment of all God's gracious promises to his people, in all ages of the world; it is the end and reward of our spiritual calling, and fulfilling of all our desires and expectations, and crowning of all our labours, and the highest step of that glory and happiness unto which we pretend.

You, devout souls, that delight in the contemplation of celestial things, I pray consider with me the accomplishment and the perfection of three kinds of work, which have been succeeded by their several rests. The first was that of the creation of the world; for in six days God created the heavens and the earth, and all things in them; and when he had finished his works, and found that they were good and perfect, he rested the seventh day, Gen. i. & ii. therefore he blessed and sanctified it. The second great work was that of *redemption*; for when our Saviour had fulfilled all the prophecies which mentioned him; when he caused the meaning of all the ancient types and figures to appear in his *person and sufferings*; when

he had fully satisfied the justice of God, and purchased for us with his blood an eternal redemption, he cried out, *All is finished*, John xix. and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. After this, Christ had nothing more to do, nor suffer, but he is gone into heaven to rest from all his works, Rev. v. and to take possession of all power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and praise. The third work is that of our *glorification*; when we shall see the new heavens appear, and a new earth, when our bodies shall be clothed with incorruption and immortality, and united again to our souls; and when in both soul and body we shall attain to the highest glory, and most perfect happiness, then he that sits upon the throne of eternity shall say with a loud voice, *All is finished*, Rev. xxi.

Afterwards the sabbath of sabbaths shall succeed that eternal rest, and that peace which shall never be interrupted by any unhappiness. We may say, that the first rest is that of God the Father, the second belongs to the Son, and the third is the rest of the Holy Ghost, that shall have then gathered all the saints together, reared up the house of God to the roof, and perfectly enlightened and sanctified the *Catholic Church*, from whence shall proceed its eternal glory and happiness. Or rather, we may say, that this last rest is the rest of all the three Persons of the most holy and glorious Trinity; for then they shall rest from all manner of works for ever and ever, and we in the bosom of their glory: we shall also enjoy an everlasting rest. When the works of creation were finished, the works of redemption were next expected; and after the works of redemption, we hope for the works for our final glorification. But when God shall have brought us all into his glorious rest, and that he shall have declared for the third time from heaven, *All is finished*, we shall then expect nothing, neither from God's justice nor from his mercy; for all God's enemies shall be then destroyed, and it shall not be possible to add any thing to the infamy of their punishments, nor to the

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the violence of their torments. There shall be no more tears to be wiped, no more evils to be feared, nor advantage to be expected, nor crowns to receive ; for then all the children of God shall be perfectly glorified. They shall enjoy God himself, who shall be their inheritance for ever, and the bottomless fountain of all their delights ; so that it shall not be possible to add anything to their infinite glory, nor to their eternal happiness. God shall then, if I may so speak, take away all means of expressing any greater liberality and bounty.

Abraham leaped for joy, when he saw the birth-day and humiliation of the Son of God. How should we rejoice and be transported out of ourselves, when we think upon this glorious day of the appearing of our great God and Saviour ; when with the eye of faith we behold him sitting upon the clouds of heaven, coming to put a period to sin and death ; to shut up the devil and his angels in the bottomless pit of hell, to deliver his church from all evils, enemies, and dangers, and to promote it to the highest felicity, and to an everlasting glory.

After this, believing soul, I must draw the curtain, and suffer my pen to fall from my hand ; for mine eyes dazzle at the sight of so shining a light, and my soul is surprised at the consideration of so much glory ; and so perfect an happiness.

Although I have lengthened this treatise more than I at first proposed to myself, I must needs confess, that whatsoever I have said upon so rich and glorious a subject, falls far short of the truth. But I am persuaded, that there will be here enough for pious and devout souls, who seek not for the ornament of language, nor for the flourishes of rhetoric, but for the true and solid comforts of God's holy word. You, Christians and believing souls, for whose sake I have undertaken this work, I intreat you for the glory of God, and for your own salvation, to preserve in your minds the ideas of these things that I have

now spoken of. Imprint them in your memories, grave them upon your hearts with the point of a diamond, and especially take delight in reducing them to practice, and you shall assuredly find both joy and comfort. Think often upon death, let it be the most familiar and most pleasant subject of your discourse ; expect it at every moment, and lead such a life as if death were already upon your lips. Fear not the many troubles of this human life ; doubt not but that God hath determined the time and manner of your going out of the world, and that every kind of death of the children of God is precious in his sight. Since you are to live but a short time upon earth, settle not your hearts, but possess your riches and advantages not as possessing them, remembering that the fashion of the world passeth away. Since it is sin alone that makes death appear so terrible to us, hate all manner of vice, and study the practice of piety.

And in regard there is nobody at the hour of death but wisheth that he had lived well, think upon your latter end, and you shall never be able to sin. If your mind is disturbed with the consideration of those things which shall happen after your decease, learn to rest upon the wise providence of God, that sees into the depths of eternity, that provides for all things, and that draws light out of the greatest darkness. Are you cast upon a bed of sickness and disease, open the eye of faith, and you shall see yourselves encompassed about with holy angels, and in the arms of God himself. Dread not the violence of pain, for God shall never forsake you in your grief, he shall never suffer you to be afflicted above what you are able to endure. Fancy him not as a dreadful and merciless Judge, but look upon him as a gracious and loving Father, who desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live. If death appears to you with a frightful countenance, if it fills you full of terrors, cast your eyes by faith upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall

see

see there all the armour of death broken in pieces; you shall see there a divine and precious blood running down, which has satisfied for all our sins, and marked unto you the way of God's eternal sanctuary. Let not the grave that is digging for you terrify you, since the King of kings has been laid there before you, and filled it with his most divine odours. Let death seem to you never so dreadful, remember that our Saviour hath overcome it by his resurrection. Fear not therefore to encounter it, for our great God and Saviour shall make you partake of his victory. And that you might cause in your souls an earnest longing to go to heaven, look upon Jesus Christ there, who prepares a place for you, and desires that you should be eternally with him, to behold his joy and glory. Fear not the separation of the soul from the body, since death, which shall separate you from yourselves, is not able to separate you from the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, the soul of our souls, the seal of the promises of God, and the earnest of our future inheritance. Instead of looking behind, and longing for these perishing advantages, and for honours that can only dazzle the eye, consider that death shall wipe away all tears, remove all your grief, and raise you above all the storms of the world, above all the miseries and troubles that cover the face of the earth. That you may be able to follow this death more cheerfully, remember that it draws you out of a place all polluted with sin, and infected with impiety, to transport you into a new heaven, adorned with righteousness and holiness, and perfumed with the prayers, praise, and thanksgiving of the glorified saints. Remember, that it frees you from all remains of corruption, and gives death's wound to all your lusts. Mind not so much the false appearance of death; for to the wicked it is as it were the suburbs of hell, the jaws of the bottomless pit, and the beginning of their endless torments; but to you, believers, it is the gate of heaven, and entrance into paradise, and a passage to a most happy life. Learn to relish now the joys
where-

wherewith your souls shall be for ever satisfied, when God shall crown you with his glory, and make you drink of the rivers of his pleasure. Since your soul is going to put on a garment of an immortal colour, and to dwell for ever in the palace which God hath built with his almighty hand, cast off willingly this wretched, infirm, and corruptible body.

Depart willingly out of this earthly tabernacle, which turns of itself to dust. Consider well, that though it fall by death, it shall rise again at the resurrection ; and that then it shall at last become the temple of God, and the tabernacle of his glory. Finally, O religious souls, shut your eyes to the world, and to all the vanities that the world adores, and aspire to the real advantages which God hath prepared for you before the creation of the world, and in which you shall joy when the world shall be no more. Let your precious faith, and your blessed hope, enter into eternity itself, to behold that extraordinary happiness and glory which God shall accomplish when he shall bring us both in soul and body into this celestial paradise, to see his face, in which is fulness of joy.

In regard this perfect happiness and infinite glory, which never entered into the heart and thoughts of man, shall never be perfectly accomplished, but at that day when Jesus Christ shall appear from heaven, to be glorified in his saints, and to become wonderful in all believers; think always upon this glorious day, the end of all our wishes, the fulfilling of all our hopes, and the perfection of all those designs which God hath purposed in himself from eternity.

You, devout souls, that are grieved to see the world prosper, and Satan's empire flourish, to see God's children subject to all the darts of death, take good courage, and rejoice with an holy joy ; for shortly all the enemies of God and of our salvation shall be punished with an everlasting punishment,

ment, as from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Shortly the devils, his angels, his agents and slaves, shall be bound up in chains of darkness, and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shut up in the bottomless pit. Shortly death shall be no more, and this church of Jesus Christ, whose miseries and afflictions cause you to weep, shall be clothed with unspeakable light and glory; it shall enter with joy and triumph into the heavenly Jerusalem, and you yourselves shall sing with all the glorified armies of heaven.

Since Christ shall come as a thief in the night, and shall surprise all the children of the world unawares, to incline your souls, believers, to the love of God, and expectation of your merciful Lord, behave yourselves in the same manner as you would do if you were now at the eve of this great festival, as if you did spy already the breaking of this most happy day. Entertain now the same affection and joy, as if you did hear the voice of God, and the trumpet of the archangel, as if the earth was already in a flame, and as if Jesus Christ himself were coming in the clouds of heaven. And in regard no impure thing shall enter into the heavenly and holy Jerusalem, and that without holiness no man shall see the face of God, cleanse yourselves, Christians, from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Forsake all manner of vice, give yourselves over to virtue, and to the practice of good works; imitate the diligence of that faithful servant, that you may not be ashamed at the coming of your great Master. Take heed that ye be not like the wise virgins, that slept as well as the foolish; but watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation; for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Redeem the time, for the days are evil, and make haste to put on the garments of righteousness and innocence; fill your hearts with the holy oil of faith, of hope,
and

and of charity. Take your lamps in your hands, and let your souls shine with a divine light.

In this blessed disposition let us go and meet our heavenly bridegroom, and hasten his coming by our prayers and groans. Let our souls be full of love; let them sigh for our divine Jesus, and being moved with the same affections as St. John, let us say to him with an earnest desire, "Come, Lord Jesus;" and if he answers, "For certain I come quickly;" let the longing of our souls increase more and more, that we may be able to pray more fervently, and let this cry reach up to heaven, "Come, Lord Jesus, even come, Lord, come quickly." *Amen.*

A PRAYER and MEDITATION for a believing Soul, that rejoices and comforts itself in looking upon Death's Destruction, and the everlasting and blessed Life which we hope to enjoy, both in Soul and Body, after the Resurrection.

O Great Judge of the world, Author of life and happiness, thy grace hath bestowed upon me the seeds of immortality, the first-fruits of glory, and the foretastes of everlasting delight; by faith I have prospect into those joys and felicities of paradise, into which my soul shall enter at its departure out of this wicked world, and into that glory prepared for my body at thy appearing. O raise my mind to eye continually that complete and unspeakable felicity and glory, promised to both soul and body, when thou shalt be revealed from heaven with flames of fire, to take vengeance of unbelievers, and to glorify the saints. Let me not be unmindful of the magnificent throne, where thou shalt sit to judge the quick and the dead, before which the greatest princes and monarchs, as well as their meanest subjects and slaves, must appear, to hear the just sentence of their doom, and to receive the reward of their deeds. Grant that I may now rejoice in expectation of that happy day, in which all the enemies of thy glory and our salvation shall be destroyed, in which Satan, his angels,

angels and wicked agents, and the instruments of his kingdom, shall be bound in chains, and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, from whence they shall never be released; in which death shall be no more, all the living shall become immortal, and thy church be crowned and enter in triumph into that magnificent city, built with gold, pearls, and precious stones, where thy glory shall continue for ever to enlighten it, and accomplish our happiness. O that I may now expect with comfort and joy that blessed state, where we shall neither hunger nor thirst, but be advanced to the condition and perfection of angels, be clothed with light and glory, and being crowned with an eternal felicity, rejoice with the celestial societies and patriarchs, prophets, apostles, confessors, and martyrs, and with all the princes and monarchs, who have lived, and are departed, in thy fear and favour, and where we shall be admitted to the vision of God, and be changed and satisfied with his divine likeness. O Lord! grant that I may always have this glorious and happy day in my thoughts, when all thy promises shall be fulfilled, all thy works finished, and our desires and expectations fully accomplished. And because this time and day is unknown to us, give us grace to live always waiting for it, as if we were at the eve of this eternal sabbath, that our lamps may be trimmed, provided, and burn with the oil of faith, hope, and charity, and we ready and awake at thy glorious appearing, clothed with a wedding-garment, fit to enter with thee into eternal blessedness. Grant us grace to desire and look for this promised redemption, long to hear the sound of the last trumpet, and behold thy coming in the clouds of heaven, O divine Saviour! that we may ascend to meet thee, and welcome thy glorious appearance. O Lord, forgive our impatient wishes, and hasten that day for the elect's sake. Come with thy powerful angels, and the ministers of thy heavenly court, to execute justice on thine enemies, and deliver thy servants. Come and put an end to this wicked world, infected with sin,

and subject to corruption and vanity, and purge the heavens and the earth from all pollution. Come and take vengeance for the innocent blood of thy martyrs, shed by Antichrist and his cruel agents; bind the devils in chains of darkness, and shut them up with Death for ever in the bottomless pit. Lord Jesus, have pity on the cries and sufferings of thy distressed people. Come and deliver them out of this cruel Egypt, out of this abominable Babylon, where they continue in captivity. O merciful Lord! is it not time that thou shouldst bring us to thy celestial Canaan? Give us to taste of the milk and honey, of the most refined joys and comfort, and introduce us into thine holy Jerusalem, the city of peace and everlasting rest. Come, therefore, and wipe away the tears, and stop the crying of thine afflicted people. Take them out of this infamous prison, open to them the gates of thy magnificent palace, clothe them with light, and perfect thy salvation and their happiness. We have been a long while contending with our spiritual and temporal enemies, in our tedious and troublesome journey through the world, and at a distance from thee; we now long to be nearer to thee, O wonderful Redeemer! who hast accomplished all thy works, and that of our redemption, by thy blood and sufferings. Perfect, also, we beseech thee, that of our glorification; receive us and thy church into that complete felicity prepared for us from the beginning of the world, and purchased with thy precious blood and sufferings. O merciful God! admit us to that state where we have nothing to fear, nothing to desire, and nothing to wish for, but be always employed in praising thine infinite bounty and mercy. Join our voices with the anthems of the holy angels, that with the blessed saints we may be able to say, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for death is swallowed up in victory, and the grand accuser of our brethren is shut up in the bottomless pit, which accuseth them before our God day and night.

And

And they have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and have not loved their own lives unto death. Unto him, who hath loved and washed us from all our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God his Father, to him, I say, as to the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, and dominion, for ever. *Amen.*

AN ACCOUNT OF
SOME REMARKABLE PASSAGES RELATING TO

MR. DRELINCOURT,

Who departed this Life at Paris, the 4th Nov. 1669; taken out of the French Edition of his Book of Death.

TO prevent false reports spread abroad concerning the death of our reverend author, I thought it convenient to publish this brief and exact narrative concerning his person, sickness, and death. He was of a very strong and healthy constitution, indefatigable in his ministry, of such a sharp and active spirit, and so pious for the glory of God, that he spared not himself, either by night or day, in discharging the duty of his function, and in acts of charity, being naturally of a courteous and obliging temper. He succeeded Mr. Du Moulin, who was removed to Sedan; and was a long time the third minister to serve that congregation at Charenton. This continual and restless employment in his ministry, by degrees mightily impaired his health, especially in the declension of his age.

In the year 1668, the 30th of April, though indisposed, he adventured to accompany one of his grand-daughters to her grave, assisted by one of his sons; but could scarce return

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home,

home, being weary and in a fainting sweat, and his countenance changed, which alarmed his family; but, by some present remedy, he then recovered. This accident hindered him not from preaching the next day at Charenton, in his turn, nor from his daily offices, wishing often he might die with his pen in his hand. When his family intreated him to spare himself in his old age, in visiting the sick and the poor, unto whom he was very acceptable, by reason of his excellent talents in praying, and understanding how to comfort the diseased; he told them, that he had once that resolution, but the importunities of his people, and the desire he had to be serviceable to them, would not suffer him to omit doing it.

In a stormy season, at nine of the clock at night, he adventured to visit a departing soul, and returned not till after midnight, and seemed very glad to be able to perform it; but these continual fatigues made him pass this judgment upon himself, that he would not long continue, and therefore was in a constant preparation for his change.

This made him frequently peruse his book of *Consolations against Death*, praising God who assisted him in publishing such an useful work. He was then writing several other excellent treatises, which he earnestly desired to finish, with submission to the great wisdom of God, as he expresseth himself in a prayer at the end of his book called *Charitable Visits*. "Lord, (saith he,) I have lived and preached a long time: I wait for thy salvation and deliverance; I am not weary to serve so good a Master, and so bountiful a Lord; but, O my God, when it shall please thee to put an end to my labours, I shall depart to a fulness of joy into thy glorious rest."

This he writ the year before his death. The next year he had some intervals of perfect health, but they were followed by two dangerous relapses. The first was in April; yet though
indisposed,

indisposed; he forced himself to preach at Charenton, against the advice of his physicians, and he continued in the exercise of his function. On the 9th of May he opened the synod of Charenton, and at the conclusion of his speech he received the applauses of his brethren there assembled, for which he gave God thanks for having enabled him with so much strength; and on the 12th of Sept. 1669, being a fast-day, he preached again twice in the *Court of the Temple*, with much freedom and vigour. This interval of health continued till the 27th of October following, when in his turn he preached at Charenton; and his auditors found that he spoke with much freedom, and powerfully. It is remarkable, that he left the epistle of St. Peter, that he was expounding before, and chose for a text, Psa. li. 7, 8. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

This last sermon was looked upon afterwards as a presage he had of his death, and a preparation for it, by desiring the pardon of his sins, and a cleansing from all the pollutions of his flesh and spirit, through the infinite mercy of God, and the blood of his Saviour. The whole audience were very well satisfied with his last performance, which they judged to be excellent, and worthy to crown all his former religious exercises. At his return to the city he spent the rest of the sabbath in acts of piety and charity; and, at his return home, being desirous to enjoy the company of all his family then at Paris, he supped with them, and seemed very pleasant in his discourse; he continued well on Monday, and the next day, till the 29th of October, the fatal day in which his *mortal distemper* began to attack him; from that morning he felt an indisposition, and had no appetite at dinner; yet could not forbear visiting sick persons in his district. This good man came home very feeble, and out of order, with a fever upon him. Some time after, his speech failed him; and when Mr. Malnoe (advocate in Parliament, his son-in-law) was come to visit him, he

he was scarce able to speak; he was persuaded to take his rest; he suddenly fell upon his knees, and made such an excellent prayer, that his family never heard from him one more fervent. He discoursed "of the frailty of human life, of the condition he was in, of the church of God, and insisted earnestly upon her deliverance;" he prayed for all the members of his family; and in this last religious performance among his domestics he omitted nothing material, prayed with zeal and vigour, with a clear voice, and without hesitation, to their comfort, and his own satisfaction, being then only a little feverish. In this hopeful condition he went to bed; but about midnight he relapsed again into his former difficulty of speech. The fever increasing upon him by degrees, a physician by his prescriptions gave him relief; and he remembered the *Psalms* which he was wont to repeat, namely, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiv, lxi, lxii, lxiii, cxvi. and cxxx. He had always a great veneration for the book of *Psalms*, which made him like the reading of John de Lere; who writes, how some savages of Brazil were wonderfully affected and ravished at the hearing of one of those divine hymns sung. A certain person that came to visit him, prayed that God would change his bed of sickness to a bed of health. He answered, My bed of health and rest will be in paradise. A noble lady, then a close prisoner, for whom the sick person had a high esteem, having sent to inquire of his health, he told the messenger he was very sorry for her confinement, ordered him to present his service to the good lady, and to tell her, that he should see her no more but in heaven.

During this short interval, his mind was free to discourse about his domestic affairs; but in a little time after, his cough and fever increasing violently upon him, his physician watched with him till morning. Our patient perceiving his dangerous condition, spake in this manner to him: "Sir, though all good Christians ought continually to be prepared to die, and though God hath granted me the grace to be ready when he

he shall please to call me ; yet if you find I am drawing to my end, pray give me notice of it ; for I am willing to put my affairs in order." About two or three hours after, the physician, finding he could not live much longer, it was judged convenient by his son-in-law to acquaint him with it ; to whom he spake to this purpose : "I find the time of my deliverance is drawing near, and that God will take me to his rest. I shall be glad to discourse with you privately : I have not only looked upon you as my son-in-law, but as my child, whom I have loved, and tenderly love ; I recommend my family to your care, and desire you all to live in perfect union." And having given his blessing to all his children, as well absent as present, he ordered the private affairs of his family, and the rewards to be given to those that had been serviceable to him in his sickness ; and ordered his son-in-law to intreat Mr. Girard, the elder of his church, to carry this message to the Consistory of Charenton, That he died their faithful servant, and prayed God with all his heart to preserve the church.

After this, he spent most part of his time in prayers to God, repeating several texts of scripture, but with such a weak voice, they could only guess by some syllables what he said. He was often heard to repeat the words of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth ;" and those of the Psalms, "I have put my trust in thee," &c. "I recommend my soul into thy hands." Thus he continued in his pious meditations. Then his son-in-law offered to read to him out of his book of *Consolations against the Fears of Death*, which he attended to, and seemed to be well pleased with the *Consolation for a dying Minister*, and with the prayer appointed for such a one who faced death with a holy joy. That is, said he, very good : I don't speak it because it came from me ; God be praised, that he enabled me to publish this book, to comfort others and myself. The next morning, the first of November, when Mr. Girard came to visit him, he repeated to him the same words
that

that he had given to his son-in-law in charge to tell him; and he delivered to him a bill to be prayed for publicly in the congregation. At that time Mr. Daille, Mr. Morus, and Mr. Claude came to see him, expressing their tender affection and concernment for him; at which he seemed to be moved. Mr. Daille made a pathetic exhortation, which the patient kindly accepted; and speaking of the loss the church would sustain by his death, Mr. Drelincourt answered, "Sir, you are far more useful to her than I can be; my desire is to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better for me." At which words Mr. Daille asked him, Don't you add, with the apostle, that it is more necessary for the church that you should continue in the flesh? He replied, "God will raise ministers who shall discharge their duty better than I can." When Mr. Daille asked him whether his hope was not in the mercy of God? he answered him in divers texts of scripture, such as these, "I know in whom I have believed; I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, &c. I draw towards the mark of the prize of the high calling," &c.

Mr. Daille perceiving how painful his speech was to him, advised him to speak to himself, to hinder the increase of his distemper; but he answered, "how willing he was to glorify God to the last gasp, and edify by his speech such as were there present." Then, having embraced each other at their parting, Mr. Daille told him, he did not altogether despair of his recovery, and that he hoped God would save him, according to the prayers of the church: He replied, "The will of the Lord be done; I resign myself entirely to the order of his providence." The two other ministers were not wanting in their prayers and exhortations. About noon these gentlemen left him to his rest, which he desired then to take; but instead of sleeping, he was heard to pray very earnestly three or four times, and concluded each prayer with *Our Father*,
and

and I believe in God, &c. He gave his blessing to all his children, and to them that desired it of him. The afternoon, Mr. Claude returned to him again, and continued till six; our patient answered him distinctly, but briefly, by reason of his great weakness. About eleven of the clock at night, several physicians came to him; and at the sight of him they agreed, that there were scarce any hopes of him; meantime he was praying and addressing himself to God, but could not be well understood. Yet when a lady, one of his intimate friends, came to his bed-side, he said, "Madam, you are an eye-witness of my groans and sufferings; but I cannot well speak to you." And about ten at night he called to mind that a pledge of some value had been committed to his keeping. He ordered it to be taken out of his closet, brought to him, examined if it were all there, and gave order to restore it to the right owner.

His second son, minister of the reformed church of Fontainebleau, came into the room to see his dear father departing, who knew him, and seemed to be moved at the first sight of him: Mr. Claude then asked him if he knew his son; he answered, *Yes*. This was the last word he was heard distinctly to speak. His son assisted his dying father with his exhortation and prayers: he was sensible to the last, his countenance never changed till about an hour before he deceased; and though nature was struggling with the disease, and he tormented with a burning fever, he seemed by his looks to be transported with joy, and full of comfort. On Sunday the fourth of November, 1669, this reverend divine yielded up his soul to God.

This was the end of this holy and zealous servant of God, who departed this life in the 74th year of his age, the 52d year of his ministry, and in the 50th year after his being called to serve the reformed church of Paris. He died in the bed

of honour, in the exercise of the duties of his function, preaching the gospel, writing in vindication of the truth, and comforting the sick, &c.

The eloquent tongue of Mr. Daille and Mr. Morus, from the pulpit of Charenton, the tears of the whole congregation that day and the next, when they committed his body to the grave, in expectation of a joyful resurrection, in a word, the commendation of people of both religions, sufficiently verified the saying of Solomon, "The memory of the just is blessed." The portraiture of this excellent, learned, and religious mind, may be seen in his works, particularly in this useful and comfortable treatise, *The Consolations against the Fears of Death*.

We doubt not but he is gone to receive in heaven the incorruptible crown of glory, which the great God and Redeemer of our souls promiseth of his mercy to all faithful servants. God grant we may imitate his excellent life, and follow him in his happy end !



APPENDIX.

THE

Duty and Importance of inculcating Religious Principles

AMONG THE

COMMON PEOPLE IN THESE NATIONS.

IT is one mark of that wisdom by which the world is governed, that the assistance afforded is proportioned to the necessities of the times wherein such assistance is called for. When the darkness which covers a land becomes so thick as to make men despair of its removal, light shall suddenly arise from an unexpected quarter; small, indeed, and scarce discernible, at first; but gently and gradually increasing, till the darkness vanishes, and the perfect day is formed. When corruption of one kind or other has in such a manner overspread the face of religion, that its features are scarcely any longer to be distinguished, a reforming hand shall appear, to do away the soil contracted in a course of ages, and restore the picture to its original beauty.

If a preacher mentions *the iniquity of the age*, it is regarded by many as a sort of cant; as a necessary ingredient in the composition of a sermon; and we are asked, if we think nations have not been as bad formerly? Undoubtedly many have; for which reason God destroyed them, and raised up others to supply their places. In the days of Noah, and in those of Lot, men were as wicked as they are now; they were more so; for a flood came upon them in one case, a storm

of fire and brimstone in the other. And whenever we shall be altogether like them, (which God forbid we ever should be,) judgment, in some shape, will seize upon us. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from us, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof." Such is the rule of Heaven's proceedings, and it altereth not. We are not yet overthrown, because our measure is not yet filled up; but if we continue daily employed in filling it, that measure must in time be full.

The matter is, however, of late "come home to our business and our bosoms." A lawless tribe of profligate, desperate, unfeeling villains, have broken loose upon the public, to rob, to maim, and to murder; so that we can no longer travel with comfort upon the road, or sleep with security in our beds. Numbers of these wretches are from time to time apprehended, and crowded together in prisons; from whence some come forth again to make fresh ravages in society, tenfold more the children of hell, if possible, than they went in; while others furnish out mournful and horrible executions of twenty or thirty at a time, to the astonishment of the kingdoms around us, and our own shame and confusion of face. How happens it, say foreigners to our countrymen, when upon their travels abroad—how happens it, that under a constitution of which you boast, as the glory of the world, monthly scenes are exhibited, which would shock the minds of Turks and Tartars? This is a question more easily asked, than answered. The fact, alas, is certain; and even the public prints begin to exclaim, that there is no police amongst us, no remedy for these disorders; and, in short, that all is over.

But let us not by any means despair. This would only make bad worse. If we once bring ourselves to fancy that no remedy can be found, no remedy ever will be found; for none will ever be sought.

It

It is a great happiness that men, in their present state, are not immortal. An evil generation passes away: and therefore, if proper care be taken, it may be succeeded by a good one. Else were the case of the world lamentable indeed. With old offenders little can be done. Hard labour, spare diet, and, above all, *solitude*, might do something; and the experiment, it is greatly hoped, will be made. But, in general, if the husbandman has in vain dug about the trees in his garden, and taken every other step necessary for their improvement; his method must be to train up younger and better plants, which may answer the end of their plantation, and bear fruit, when the others shall no longer be suffered to cumber the ground.

Of every community, as it has pleased God to ordain in the present system of things, the poor must always form a very considerable majority. The necessities of mankind could never else be supplied; for the rich will not labour, but they are constrained to pay those, who for their own, and the common good, can and will labour. In return for these services, the rich, if they were wise, should do every thing in their power to make and to keep the poor honest, virtuous, and religious; to instruct, or procure them to be instructed, in the knowledge and practice of their duty to God and man; more especially to set them a proper example. This, I say, would be to act the part of wise men, as well as good men. For when the religious principle is once perished and gone in the poor, human laws will lose their effect, and be set at nought.

I will mention a remarkable instance of this, well attested. A servant, who had made the improvement that might have been expected, from hearing the irreligious and blasphemous conversation continually passing at his master's table, where it was his place to wait, took an opportunity to rob his master.

Being

Being apprehended, and urged to give a reason for this infamous behaviour, "Sir, (said he,) I had heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, nor punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery."—"Well, but (replied the master,) had you no fear of the death which the laws of your country inflict upon the crime?" "Sir, (rejoined the servant, looking sternly at his master,) what is that to you, if I had a mind to venture that? You had removed my greatest terror; why should I fear the less?"

Behold the wisdom of propagating infidelity and atheism in a nation! As the middle and lower orders of mankind are always ready to imitate the conduct of their betters, this is one woeful specimen, among millions, of the manner in which the general corruption of faith and morals has descended, and infected the world. We must now therefore take up the matter at the other end, and try, if by reforming the poor, we cannot shame the rich into better manners, and better principles. And for our encouragement, in opposition to a master perverting his servant, let us recollect that mentioned in the scriptures of a female servant, who waited on Naaman, a general officer of the Syrians, and converted her master to the belief and worship of the God of Israel. To the poor the gospel was at first preached: to the poor let it still be preached. The rich must do as they please; but for the promotion of their interest, temporal and eternal, they cannot do better than to believe and practise it themselves, and to see that every body belonging to them does the same. God defend all masters from free-thinking servants!—and all servants from free-thinking masters!

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS *on the* REDEMPTION
of MANKIND *by* JESUS CHRIST.

1. **I**F the loadstone can communicate its virtue without suffering any decrease, and if this virtue can completely incorporate itself with iron, why might not the eternal WORD, who dwells essentially in the Father, communicate himself to an individual of the human species, and reside particularly in the soul of the Saviour Jesus Christ as God-Man, by which other men may be made partakers of the holiness and felicity of God, without becoming real gods; as the needle having its extremes powerfully touched with the loadstone, partakes of the attraction and polarity of the loadstone, without being of the nature of the loadstone? God is an infinite Being, and all his perfections are infinite as himself: his holiness, his justice, his bounty, and his wisdom, are such a vast profound that the human mind cannot fathom. Can we then affirm, without temerity, that in the depths of justice, of holiness, and of love for order, that there ought not to be such extreme severity, as to preclude the pardon of sin, even after a just indignation had been manifested against the same? If the majesty of God is infinite, is it reasonable to say, that the sins committed against him by an innumerable multitude of beings;—of crimes committed with the greatest insolence, and the most daring pride;—of crimes perpetrated by creatures loaden with his benefits;—of crimes repeated with a thousand aggravating circumstances, during thousands of years, in all parts of the world? is it reasonable, I say, to maintain, that these crimes ought to be pardoned by a Legislator of infinite justice, without punishing this criminal race in a most exemplary manner? And if such a punishment had bruised all the guilty; and if the bounty of God is as vast as his justice, is it reasonable to suppose, that an infinite bounty cannot present to an infinite justice, a victim of boundless merit fully to expiate, under conditions worthy of God, sins whose numbers

bers were become infinite and boundless, by their duration, by violating the holiness of the laws, by the grandeur of the offended Benefactor, by the majesty of the outraged Legislator, and by the insolence of the violators of these laws? Hath not boundless Wisdom power to reconcile the rights of infinite justice and bounty? What absurdity is there in forming the plan of redemption, according to which, a Being of innocence, of love for obedience, of an incomprehensible fortitude, in generously uniting himself with human nature, to pay the immense debt of this nature, to soften the hearts of the rebels, and to give to all reasonable beings the most perfect demonstration of a wisdom, of a bounty, of a holiness, and of a justice, which are infinite; and accommodating himself to the maintenance of their rights, and completely to developpe them in time and in eternity? Is it not strange that such a plan, formed by the love, the justice, the wisdom, and the bounty of the Supreme Being, executed by the incarnate Word, confirming a great number of prophecies;—a plan which has the admiration of angels, and of millions of pious persons for so many ages, which hath comforted such multitudes of penitents, in the most frightful circumstances, and hath made so many martyrs to triumph under the greatest torture, and even sing in the cold arms of death: is it not strange, I say, that such a plan should be the constant topic of ridicule to Socinians and Deists? Can the finite always judge of the infinite? Are the pretended advocates for reason constantly so *unreasonable*, as absolutely to fix what the justice of the Supreme Being ought to demand, what the moral order of the universe ought to require, and how infinite Bounty ought to accommodate himself to his creatures? How absurd must that religion be, which lays for its foundation this dogma of the sages of our age! A being bounded as I am, who neither knows his grandson nor grandfather, who is ignorant of the nature of his own soul, and of those vile atoms which constitute his body, can he be so perfectly acquainted

quainted with the profound depths of divine justice, mercy, and wisdom, as clearly to decide that the Redemption of Mankind by the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God, is contrary to his perfections? Is not the base incredulity of our modern philosophers owing to their contracted views of the bounty of God, the excellency of an immortal soul, and of the odious nature of sin! "It is impossible (say they) that the *eternal Word*, the *Prince of Life*, should become incarnate, and be sacrificed for human nature." But, if the soul of man was formed in the image of God; if it is infinite in its duration and desires; if its progress towards perfection is boundless; if God loves him with that tenderness with which a father nourishes his child; if the love which is in God as much surpasses the generosity of all fathers, and the tenderness of all mothers, as the infinite surpasses the finite; is it reasonable to say, that our heavenly Father, for the ransom of millions of souls, would not offer such a sacrifice as his incarnate WORD? If king Codrus loved his subjects so far, as to disguise, and to offer himself to death, in order to procure them certain temporal advantages; if the Daciuses and the Curtiuses felt so strong an interest in the welfare of their country, as to sacrifice their lives in order to deliver their fellow-citizens from a transient calamity; if a Swiss so generously devoted himself to death, by running to Sampach covered with the lances of conflicting hosts, to clear the way for his victorious companions; if mothers have sacrificed their own lives to preserve those of their children; and if love, or the generous desire of saving one's neighbour, hath produced many sacrifices; is it absurd to say, that infinite Bounty never could, nor ever would, perform an act of compassion equally glorious and efficacious, to deliver millions of souls from more dreadful miseries, and to procure to them the blessings of an infinite duration, and of an inestimable value?

sophers, if you contemplate the majesty of the Supreme Being, the immensity of his perfections, the holiness of his laws, the beauty of the moral order, the demerit of sin, and the price of souls which Jesus Christ hath redeemed, you will see, that it is absurd even to doubt that God had *power* or *will* to offer a sacrifice of *infinite value* for their redemption. If you say, that this redemption of human nature by the humiliation and sufferings of the incarnate WORD, is unworthy of God; it is demanded of you, whether it be unworthy of a being *infinitely good*, to give an astonishing proof of his bounty? Is it unworthy of a being *infinitely just*, to display his justice in a most exemplary manner? Is it unworthy of *infinite wisdom* to form a divine man, sufficiently rich to become the pledge of his brethren, sufficiently *strong* to bear the burden which must otherwise have depressed them, sufficiently *wise* and *good* to obtain for them the pardon of sin, and becoming for them the model of perfect holiness, and the channel of all grace by which they may recover that holiness and glory from which they have fallen?

But it is incredible (*you say*) that the Prince of Life should die. Understand us: the Prince of Life did not *properly* die; this being absolutely impossible: but the Prince of Life being united to a mortal body, could easily quit it for two or three days, after having endured unutterable anguish. As the mortal body entered into a state of death, the sacrifice offered to divine justice was complete, the tomb was consecrated for the consolation of mortals, the faithful have a certain earnest or pledge of their resurrections in that of their Chief, and the Saviour fully sheweth himself the *resurrection* and the *life*, in rising victorious from the grave, into which he entered, "to destroy him who had the power of death, and to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15. In short, if the WORD was abased on earth for the space of thirty-three years,

years, and by his condescension to leave his body to repose in the tomb for three days, what is this short space for the *Prince of Eternity*? A thousand years in his sight are but as one day; and three days are but as the twinkling of an eye; and, far from being dishonoured by this momentary act of pity, of love, and of mercy, he hath acquired, in the sight of all reasonable beings, a glory so grand, that sooner or later every knee both in heaven and on earth shall bow before him. We may then conclude with St. Paul, "That the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto them who are saved, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 18—24.

II. *Particular Observations on the Redeemer.* If the preceding reflections prove that the opinion of redemption by Jesus Christ is conformable to reason, the following will serve to prove that the Deists are *unreasonable*, and that the foolish *credulity* with which they tax us, may with justice be charged upon them.

O ye, who refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, can you absolutely refuse to credit any thing concerning him? And if you believe something, will you not have greater difficulty in giving an account of your belief, than the Christian has in giving a reason of his faith? If you think the Christian Legislator never existed but in the imagination of his followers, you are pressed with a multitude of witnesses, both Jewish and Pagan, as well as by those of the Christian, and even by all the Mahomedans. The Jews never denied the existence of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection, though they have thought themselves justified in rejecting him, notwithstanding the striking prediction of David, Psa. xxii. 16.

The heathens do not permit us to doubt the reality of his existence; witness Pliny the younger, Tacitus, Lucian, and

Suetonius, four pagan authors, who were contemporaries of St. John or of his disciples. Pliny, who flourished about twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and who was governor of Bythinia, wrote to the emperor Trajan, that he had put two christian slaves to the torture. But I find nothing, said he, but a bad and extravagant superstition. He calls the zeal and constancy of the Christians, "a wilful and inflexible stubbornness." Speaking of those whom fear had driven to renounce their profession of religion, he adds, "They declared that all their fault or error consisted in assembling before light, on a fixed day, and singing a hymn to Christ as unto a God." They certainly never would expose themselves to death for the support of an imaginary person, or the hero of a romance. Jesus Christ has existed, and given proofs of his divinity, since Christians of both sexes, and of every age, were ready to die for him, at a time when *ocular evidence*, and *recent facts*, left no means to cover an imposture. This persecution commenced before the reign of Trajan; for the emperor Nero, having caused fire to be set to the city of Rome, in order to form an idea of the burning of Troy, punished the Christians, as if they had been the authors of the crime. Behold how Tacitus mentions this event in the 15th book of his Annals. Nero, to smother the noise of his crime, suborned false witnesses to accuse a people hated for their iniquities, commonly called Christians; making them undergo the most dreadful punishments. The author of this sect was Christus, whom Pontius Pilate, the governor, put to death. This pernicious sect had been suppressed for some time, recovered strength, not only in Judea, where it originated, but likewise in Rome, which is the common sink of the crimes and follies of all the world. They seized on all who professed themselves Christians; in short, by the imperial mandate, an immense multitude were condemned, less for having set fire to Rome, than because they were objects of universal hatred. They added mockeries to their tortures.

tortures. Some were covered with skins of ferocious animals, and torn by dogs ; others crucified, and others burned in the evenings, to illuminate the streets during the night.— These passages are cited, not only to shew that the heathens acknowledged the existence of Jesus Christ, and the innocence of Christians ; but also, to demonstrate the exact accomplishment of the prophecies : “ Ye shall be hated of all nations for my sake ;” said the Saviour. The Christians were the objects of universal hatred, saith Tacitus. I mention this to refute Voltaire, who tells his dupes, that “ Domitian was the first of the Cesars who disturbed the Christians.

St. Luke informs us, that the emperor Claudius commanded all Jews to depart Rome, Acts xviii. 2. And Suetonius, a heathen historian, in his life of Claudius, chap. 25, agrees with the sacred penman, saying, “He drove the Jews from Rome, who caused continual tumults at the instigation of one Christus ;” for this is what the Pagans generally call Jesus Christ. If Jesus had never existed but in the imagination of his disciples, Lucian, in his *Peregrinus*, could not have called him, “The great Man crucified in Palestine ;” nor could he have said, “that the Christians forsook the pagan divinities, to adore their crucified Master.” Had our divine Master been no more than a *grand sophist*, as Lucian insinuates, heaven would not have confirmed his prediction concerning the temple of Jerusalem, by a striking prodigy. Behold the fact : “The disciples of Christ (saith St. Matt. xxiv. 1.) came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple ; and Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” As if he had said, This fine temple is going to be destroyed, and with it shall end the continual sacrifice, offered by the Jewish priests to God. When the emperor Julian had replunged himself in pagan darkness, he burned with a crafty zeal against the christian religion,

religion, thinking to weaken it, by proving that Jesus Christ was a false prophet; and imagining this would be sufficiently done, by rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, and the Jews again to offer their sacrifice. But the attack was against the King of kings. Ruffinus and Sozomen mention this business at large. See what Ammien Marcellin says in his Annals, book 23. "Julian having a great desire to perpetuate the memory of his reign, by the grandeur of his enterprizes, formed the design of rebuilding the superb temple of Jerusalem, which having been taken by assault, and after many bloody encounters, was destroyed, while Vespasian and Titus were carrying on the siege. To rebuild this temple would require immense sums: Julian having charged Alipius of Antioch with the undertaking, he who had commanded in Britain under the governors. But when Alipius, seconded by the governor of the province, was eager to advance the work, globes of fire, bursting suddenly from the earth, near the foundation of the building, rendered the place inaccessible by the constant assaults which they made upon the workmen, many of whom perished by the flames. So that they were obliged to desist from pursuing the enterprize, to which fate, and the element of fire, were so strongly opposed." More than this can scarcely be expected from a heathen author, who had been a general in Julian's army: but he speaks sufficiently clear, so as not to leave any doubt of the truth of so remarkable an event.

If pagan authors have only spoken of Jesus Christ indirectly, or slightly, it is not the same with the Mahomedans. Though in many respects they are *Pagans*, saith the learned Dr. Moore, their law contains many articles of the Old and New Testament. The principal dogma of their faith, and which with *ravishment* they constantly confess in their mosques, is (*La illa illella*) "There is but one God." It is true, this is only what is believed by the Jews; but the Mahomedans

homedans go much further; having a design to prove that they merit the name of *semi Christians*, which is given them by a learned author: for in both their *Alcoran* and the *Zuna*, it is declared, "That Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and that he was born of the Virgin Mary;" "That the gospel is the light, the way, and the salvation of men; and that such as reject it shall perish;" "That Christ knew the thoughts of the heart, gave sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb, healed incurable diseases, and raised the dead." The *Alcoran* even attributes three advantages to Jesus-Christ, which it refuses to Abraham, to Moses, and to Mahomad himself: the first is, "that he was translated soul and body into heaven," from whence (it is said in the *Zuna*) "he shall return to judge the world in righteousness." The second is, That he shall be called "THE WORD OF GOD:" and the third, That he shall be named "THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD." See *Confusio Sectæ Mahometanæ*, by *Johannes Andreas*, and many others.

-I would remind my readers, that the reason of the above quotations is, first, to shew that though the *Alcoran* so much disfigures Christianity, for the chastising of disobedient and hypocritical Christians; yet it admits enough of our doctrines to overthrow *idolatry*, and the external empire of Satan upon earth; insomuch that in Africa and India, Mahomedanism prepares idolaters for the reception of Christianity. And, secondly, to nourish our hope, that the Mahomedans who have already such exalted notions of Jesus Christ, will embrace the gospel, when the great scandals of the Christian churches shall be done away; the additions which Mahomed has made to the gospel, being founded only upon false miracles, and absurd reveries: on the contrary, that pure Christianity contained in the gospel, is so reasonable, that all who examine with candour, are obliged to acknowledge the force of those proofs which demonstrate its truth. From the above
citations

citations it is evident, that both Jews, Pagans, and Mahomedans, have acknowledged the existence of our grand PROPHET, in such a manner, that it remains an indubitable fact.

If you imagine that Jesus Christ was a false prophet, you believe that it was by mere chance that the temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed, according to his prediction. And that it is mere accident which preserves the Jews in their dispersion and opprobrious condition, so clearly foretold by Moses. Or you suppose, against all probability, that the harmony of the Jewish and Christian prophecies, in this respect, is an imposture, plotted between Jews and Christians, to impose upon the world. Upon this supposition you likewise imagine, that when Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "I will make you fishers of men;" "lo, I am with you to the end of the world;" "the gates of hell shall not prevail against my church;" you imagine, I say, that when Jesus Christ spake thus, he saw by accident that his gospel would spread thro' all the Roman empire, and that the most powerful monarchs, Dioclesian and Julian, should not be able to overturn Christianity. In short, that his holy doctrine would be disseminated thro' all parts of the known world, and even civilize nations in a part of the globe not then discovered. You moreover think, that it was by mere chance that Jesus Christ foretold, in these words, the vile hypocrisy and scandalous divisions of wicked Christians. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Notwithstanding this spiritual apostasy of Christians in our days, so clearly foretold by Jesus Christ and his apostles, [compare Matt. xxiv. 10. with 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. and 2 Thes.

ii. 3.

ii. 3. and 1 John ii. 18.] we see the other part of our Lord's prediction accomplishing, and Christianity daily extending through Russia and Siberia, even unto China, and the *East*; while in the *West* it is franchising Americans from that savage ferocity so natural to them; one cannot help saying to Christians what Moses said to the Jews, "But when Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, he lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them."

In short, it is vain superstition, incredulity, false philosophy, and the rank apostasy of baptized *infidels*, and professing *worldlings*, which rush forward, like the raging waves of the boiling deep, to overwhelm the fair structure of Christianity, and to sap its firm foundations: all their waves are broken. The rock on which she stands remains immoveable; and the prophecies of the Redeemer are daily advancing toward their full and complete accomplishment. "His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," Matt. iii. 10. One may reclaim some incredulous persons, whose candour will let them feel the absurdity of Jesus Christ foretelling by chance, yea, with the utmost exactness, the *improbable increase* of his church, and the *state of corruption and division* into which we see her plunged.

Twenty other absurdities flow from the system of incredulity; for, if you believe, with some, that the Son of Mary was an *Impostor*, you believe that the *Man* whose character was the most *modest* and the most *virtuous* in the eyes of reason, through his whole life played a part the most *abominable* and *diabolic*; you suppose that an ambitious man (for such was Jesus if he was not the King of kings) was formed in a manner so different from other men, as openly to attack the prejudices of those amongst whom he was going to establish his

reign; and you suppose, that, contrary to appearances and to the springs of the human mind, he had formed the plan of bringing about his purpose by the cross, and rising to immortal honours by a death the most infamous.

If you say, Jesus Christ was not an *Impostor*, but a *virtuous Man*, though a great *Enthusiast*, you weave another web of absurdities. As a *Fanatic*, could he conduct himself through his whole life with a wisdom and moderation which could never be detected? As an illiterate man, with a brain deranged by folly, could he produce a system of morality more perfect than those of all *legislators* and of all *philosophers*? Besides, enthusiasts betray, at one time or other, such extravagancies as shock right reason, and manifest their folly; on the contrary, in the conduct of Jesus Christ, as well as in his morality, nothing is seen but a wisdom replete with sweetness, as far from fanaticism as moderation is from fury.

“One thing which charms me in the character of Jesus (says *J. J. Rousseau*,) is not only the simplicity of manners, but the felicity, the grace, and even elegance.—Although he was not the wisest of mortals, he was the most amiable.” (*His third letter to Montagne.*)

Moreover, as a man, who never shewed himself but to attack all kinds of vice, could he have been an *honest man*, if he had supported false pretensions by *roguery*, continual *fraud* and *imposture*? There is no medium,—either Jesus Christ is the *incarnate Word*; and, as such, he has confirmed his assertions by *true miracles*, or he was the *most daring of impostors*, when he said, “I am the light of the world.”—“Verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am.” “All men ought to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”—“He who hath seen me, hath seen my Father also.”—“I have a greater witness than that of John; the works

works that I do, bear witness that the Father hath sent me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the *works*."—"Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised."

If, yielding to the force of this multiplied evidence, you acknowledge that Jesus Christ and his apostles sustained their mission by miraculous works, you do no more than has been done by Caiaphas, Celsus, Porphyry, those ancient enemies of Christianity, who examined these evidences even up to their source, and who wanted neither penetration to discover their falsity, nor judgment to demonstrate the same, had such a fraud existed. And in this case, reason will oblige you, either to receive the gospel, or to say, with obstinate unbelievers, that Jesus Christ and his apostles performed their miracles by the power of *magic*. But is it not much easier to believe in the gospel than in this occult science? Besides, is it not most unreasonable to suppose the devils would league with Jesus Christ and his apostles, to destroy the empire of vice, to overturn idols, to enlighten mankind, and to carry all the moral virtues to their highest degree of perfection, both in theory and practice?

Your system involves you in the same embarrassment with regard to the apostles. You are obliged to acknowledge, that either they were the true envoys of God, or else that persons of the greatest simplicity in conduct and writing, wherein they have displayed the most shining virtues, were only a band of the most obstinate *knaves* and *liars*. For, in constantly attesting the resurrection of their Master, as eye-witnesses of these facts; and in persisting in their evidence even unto death, without ever recanting; they were deeply stained with the most palpable *knavery*, and sustained it with more

guile than was ever found among sharpers; and with more stubbornness than was ever manifested by robbers, whereof one in twelve, at least, confess their imposture and guilt, when conducted to the last place of punishment. On the contrary, here, one of the twelve, who suffered himself to be seduced by the enemies of his Master, after having done justice to his character, took away his own life in despair, to which he resigned himself for having betrayed innocent blood.

And wherefore so much zeal and constancy?—If truth, seconded by a series of clear and evident facts, and by supernatural succours from heaven, had not supported the disciples of Jesus Christ, even to the last moment of their bold and unshaken confession; what motives, what rewards, could so strongly attach them to a crucified Master, and every where to preach his cross, sharing his poverty, his troubles, and his death?

If Jesus Christ is not risen, as he foretold, and if he did not fulfil his promise in shedding upon them miraculous gifts, our credulity must needs exceed all bounds, to believe that twelve ignorant, twelve poor Galilean fishermen, at the instigation of a *knave* who had deceived them, should take it into their heads to subvert all religions in the world, beginning with that of their fathers, and having accomplished their project, without any other support but that of *lies*, and the *cross* of their Master; without any other arms, than moral precepts which offend the passions; without any other *bait*, than a doctrine which crucifies the flesh; and without any other *allurement*, than dogmas which subvert the pride of philosophers. Such are the notions of our *incredulous*, who so justly merit the name of *fine geniuses*, *critics*, and *connoisseurs*, because they can digest opinions destitute of probability.

Ought

Ought not one to have a soul all *credulity*, and proof against every ray of sound reason, to persuade one's self that twelve blind persons set out from London to go and sap the foundations of all the strong cities in Europe and Asia; and that they had accomplished their design without being seconded by a supernatural power, and without any other weapons than their walking-sticks? Monstrous as this absurdity may appear, it is no greater than to suppose that twelve Jewish fishermen, without miraculous succours, overturned the foundations of Judaism and Paganism, throughout the known world, in spite of all efforts that were made by all the priests and princes to oppose the religion of Jesus Christ.

O ye Deists, ye may applaud yourselves for your incredulity! But remember, that if *prejudice* and *passion* favour your *system*, we have *reason*, *experience*, and *facts*; and after all, the absurdities which you are obliged to swallow in rejecting revelation, are more difficult to digest than the *dogmas* at which you stumble without reason. And never forget, that *Faith* leads to a *Hope* the most sweet, and to a *Charity* the most perfect: while your opinions conduct you to gloomy despair, and to a licence that, after having broken the yoke of revelation, will not fail to secure that of conscience. Melancholy observation! the truth of which might be easily demonstrated by a multitude of anecdotes upon *your* apostles, if these sort of proofs had not something in them too odious.

TWO LETTERS

ON THE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.—Acts xxvi. 25.

Wisdom is justified of her children.—Matt. xi. 19.

FIRST LETTER.

SIR,

WHEN I had the pleasure of seeing you last, you seemed surprised to hear me say, that the Son of God, for purposes worthy of his wisdom, manifests himself, sooner or later, to all his sincere followers, in a spiritual manner, which the world knows not of. The assertion appeared to you unscriptural, enthusiastical, and dangerous. What I then advanced, to prove that it was *scriptural, rational, and of the greatest importance*, made you desire I would write to you on the mysterious subject. I declined it, as being unequal to the task; but having since considered, that a mistake here may endanger your soul or mine, I sit down to comply with your request: and the end I propose by it is, either to give you a fair opportunity of pointing out my error, if I am wrong; or to engage you, if I am right, to seek what I esteem the most invaluable of all blessings,—revelations of Christ to your own soul, productive of the experimental knowledge of him, and the present enjoyment of his salvation.

As an architect cannot build a palace, unless he is allowed a proper spot to erect it upon, so I shall not be able to establish the doctrine I maintain, unless you allow me the existence of the proper senses, to which our Lord manifests himself.

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The manifestation I contend for, being of a spiritual nature, must be made to spiritual senses; and that such senses exist, and are opened in, and exercised by regenerate souls, is what I design to prove in this letter, by the joint testimony of *scripture*, our *church*, and *reason*.

I. The *Scriptures* inform us, that Adam lost the experimental knowledge of God by the fall. His foolish attempt to hide himself from his Creator, whose eyes are in every place, evidences the total blindness of his understanding.—The same veil of unbelief, which hid God from his mind, was drawn over his heart and all his spiritual senses. He died the death, the moral spiritual death, in consequence of which the corruptible body sinks into the grave, and the unregenerate soul into hell.

In this deplorable state Adam begat his children. We, like him, are not only void of the life of God, but alienated from it, through the ignorance that is in us. Hence it is, that though we are possessed of such an animal and rational life as he retained after the commission of his sin, yet we are, by nature, utter strangers to the holiness and bliss he enjoyed in a state of innocence. Though we have, in common with beasts, bodily organs of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, adapted to outward objects; though we enjoy, in common with devils, the faculty of reasoning upon natural truths, and mathematical propositions, yet we do not understand supernatural and divine things. Notwithstanding all our speculations about them, we can neither see nor taste them truly, unless we are risen with Christ, and taught of God. We may, indeed, speak and write about them, as the blind may speak of colours, and the deaf dispute of sounds, but it is all guess-work, hear-say, and mere conjecture. The things of the Spirit of God cannot be discovered but by spiritual, internal senses, which are, with
regard

regard to the spiritual world, what our bodily external senses are with regard to the material world. They are the only medium, by which an intercourse between Christ and our souls can be opened and maintained.

The exercise of these senses is peculiar to those who are born of God. They belong to what the apostles call "the new man—the inward man—the new creature—the hidden man of the heart." In believers, this hidden man is awakened and raised from the dead, by the power of Christ's resurrection. Christ is his life, the Spirit of God is his spirit, prayer or praise his breath, holiness his health, and love his element. We read of his hunger and thirst, food and drink, garment and habitation, armour and conflicts, pain and pleasure, fainting and reviving, growing, walking, and working. All this supposes senses, and the more these senses are quickened by God, and exercised by the new-born soul, the clearer and stronger is his perception of divine things.

On the other hand, in unbelievers, the inward man is deaf, blind, naked, asleep, past feeling; yea, dead in trespasses and sins; and of course, as incapable of perceiving spiritual things, as a person in a deep sleep, or a dead man, of discovering outward objects. St. Paul's language to him is, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." He calls him a *natural man*, one who hath no higher life than that his parents conveyed to him by natural generation—one who follows the dictates of his own sensual soul, and is neither born of God, nor led by the Spirit of God, "The natural man (says the apostle) receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He had no sense properly exercised for this kind of discernment, his "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into his heart, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

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The reverse of the natural man is the *spiritual*, so called because God hath revealed spiritual things to him by his Spirit, who is now in him a principle of spiritual and eternal life. "The spiritual man, (says the apostle,) judgeth, *i. e.* discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no one." The high state he is in can no more be discerned by the natural man, than the condition of the natural man can be discerned by a brute.

St. Paul not only describes the spiritual man, but speaks particularly of his internal, moral senses. Christians, says he, of full age, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. He prays, that the love of the Philippians "may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all *sense*, or *feeling*." The scriptures constantly mention, or allude to, one or other of these spiritual senses:—Give me leave to produce some instances,

1. To begin with the SIGHT.—St. Paul prays, that the *eyes* of his converts being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of their calling. He reminds them, that Christ had been evidently set forth crucified before their *eyes*. He assures them, that the God of this world hath blinded the *eyes* of them that believe not the gospel; and declares that his commission was to open the *eyes* of the Gentiles, and turn them from darkness to light. Abraham *saw* Christ's day, and was glad. Moses persevered, as *seeing* him who is invisible. David prayed, Open my *eyes*, that I may see wonders out of thy law. Our Lord complains, that the heart of unbelievers is waxed gross, that their ears are dull of hearing, and that they have closed their *eyes*, lest they should *see with their eyes*, understand with their hearts, and be converted. He counsels the Laodiceans, to anoint their *eyes* with eye-salve, that they might see. He declares, that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it *sees* him not; that the

things, which belong to the peace of obstinate unbelief, are, at last, judicially hid from their *eyes*; and, that the pure in heart shall *see* God. St. John testifies, that he, who does evil, hath not *seen* God; and that darkness hath blinded the *eyes* of him that loves not his brother. The Holy Ghost informs us, that believers look at the things which are not *seen*, and behold the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. These are the eyes, with which believers see the salvation of God. They are so distinct from those of the body, that when our Lord opened them in St. Paul's soul, he suffered scales to grow over his bodily eyes. And, no doubt, when Christ gave outward sight to the blind, it was chiefly to convince the world, that it is he who can say to blind sinners, Receive your sight; see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; look unto me and be saved.

2. If you do not admit of a spiritual HEARING, what can you make of our Lord's repeated caution, He that hath an *ear* to hear, let him hear? And what can be the meaning of the following scriptures—Hear, O foolish people, who have *ears* and hear not. Ye uncircumcised in heart and *ears*. Ye cannot *hear* my words, ye are of your father the devil. He that is of God *heareth* God's words; ye, therefore, *hear* them not, because ye are not of God. Can it be supposed that our Lord spake of outward hearing, when he said, The hour cometh, and now is, that the dead shall *hear* the voice of the Son of God, and live. My sheep *hear* my voice. He that hath *heard* and learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Do not all sinners stand spiritually in need of Christ's powerful *Ephphatha*, Be thou opened? Is that man truly converted, who cannot witness with Isaiah, The Lord hath wakened my *ear* to hear as the learned; and with the Psalmist, Mine *ears* hast thou opened? Had not the believers at Ephesus *heard* Christ, and been taught of him? When St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, did he not *hear* words unspeakable?

And

And far from thinking spiritual hearing absurd, or impossible, did he not question, whether he was not then out of the body? And does not St. John positively declare, that he was in the Spirit, when he heard Jesus say, I am the first and the last?

3. How void of meaning are the following passages, if they do not allude to that SENSE, which is calculated for the reception of, what the barrenness of human language compels me to call spiritual perfumes? The *smell* of thy ointments is better than all spices. The *smell* of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and because of the *savour* of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth.

4. If believers have not a spiritual faculty of TASTING divine things, what delusion must they be under, when they say, Christ's *fruit is sweet* to their *taste*; and cry out, How *sweet* are thy words to my *taste*! they are sweeter than honey to my mouth? But how justly can they speak thus, if they have *tasted* the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of it! Surely, if they *eat* the flesh of the Son of God, *drink* his blood, and *taste* that the Lord is gracious, they have a right to testify, that *his love is better than wine*; and to invite those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, to *taste* that the Lord is good, that they also may be satisfied with his goodness and mercy, as with marrow and fatness.

5. If we are not to be perfect stoicks in religion, if we should have one degree more of devotion than the marble statues which adorn our churches, we should have, I think, some FEELING of our unworthiness, some SENSE of God's majesty. Christ's tender heart was pierced to atone for, and to remove the hardness of ours. God promises to take from us the *heart of stone*, and to give us an heart of flesh, a *broken* and

and contrite heart, the sacrifice of which, he will not despise. Good king Josiah was praised, because his heart was *tender*. The conversion of the three thousand, on the day of Pentecost, began by their being *pricked* in their heart. We are directed to *feel* after God, if haply we might find him. Our Lord himself is not ashamed to be *touched*, in heaven, with a *feeling* of our infirmities. And St. Paul intimates, that the highest degree of obduracy and apostasy, is to be *past feeling*, and to have our consciences *seared* as with a hot iron.

I hope, sir, you will not attempt to set aside so many plain passages, by saying, they are unfit to support a doctrine, as containing empty metaphors, which amount just to nothing. This would be pouring the greatest contempt on the perspicuity of the oracles of God, the integrity of the sacred writers, and the wisdom of the Holy Ghost who inspired them. As certainly as there is a spiritual life, there are senses calculated for the display and enjoyment of it; and these senses exist no more in metaphor, than the life that exerts itself by them. Our Lord settled the point, when he declared to Nicodemus, that no man can see the kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter, except he is born of God, born of the Spirit; just as no child can see this world, except he is first born of a woman, born of the flesh. Hence it appears, that a regenerate soul hath his spiritual senses opened, and made capable of discerning what belongs to the spiritual world, as a new-born infant hath his natural senses unlocked, and begins to see, hear, and taste, what belongs to the material world into which he enters.

II. These declarations of the Lord, his prophets, and apostles, need no confirmation. Nevertheless, to shew you, sir, that I do not mistake their meaning, I shall add the testimony of our own excellent *church*. As she strictly agrees with the scripture, she makes also frequent mention of spiritual *sensations*;

tions; and you know, sir, that *sensations* necessarily suppose *senses*. She prays, that God would "give us a *due sense* of his inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." She begs, that he would "make us know and *feel* there is no other name than that of Jesus, whereby we must be saved." She affirms, that true penitents "*feel* the burden of their sins intolerable;" that godly persons "*feel* in themselves the workings of Christ's Spirit;" that "the Lord speaks presently to us in the scriptures, to the great and endless comfort of all that have any *feeling* of God in them at all;" that "godly men *felt*, inwardly, the Holy Ghost inflaming their hearts with the fear and love of God, and that they are miserable wretches, who have no *feeling* of God within them at all." And, that "if we *feel* the heavy burden of our sins pressing our souls, and tormenting us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation, we must *stedfastly behold* Christ crucified, with the *eyes* of our heart."

Our church farther declares, that "true faith is not in the mouth and outward profession only, but liveth and *stirreth* inwardly in the heart, and that if we *feel* and perceive such a faith in us, we must rejoice." That "correction, though painful, bringeth with it a *taste* of God's goodness." That "if after contrition we *feel* our consciences at peace with God, through the remission of our sins, it is God who worketh that great miracle in us;" and she prays, that, "as this knowledge and *feeling* is not in ourselves, and as by ourselves it is not possible to come by it, the Lord would give us grace to know these things, and *feel* them in our hearts." She begs, that "God would assist us with his Holy Spirit, that we may *harken* to the voice of the good Shepherd." She sets us upon asking continually, that the Lord would *lighten our darkness*, and deliver us from the two heaviest plagues of Pharaoh, *blindness and hardness of heart*. And she affirms, that "if we will be profitable hearers of the scriptures, we must

most keep under our *carnal senses*, taken by the outward words, search the inward meaning, and give place to the Holy Ghost," whose peculiar office it is to open our spiritual senses, as he opened Lydia's heart.

If I did not think the testimony of our blessed reformers, founded upon that of the sacred writers, of sufficient weight to turn the scale of your sentiments, I could throw in the declarations of many ancient and modern divines. To instance in two or three only: St. Cyril, in the 13th book of his *Treasure*, affirms, that "men know Jesus is the Lord, by the Holy Ghost, no otherwise than they, who *taste* honey, know it is sweet, even by its proper quality." Dr. Smith, of Queen's College, Cambridge, in his select discourses, observes, after Plotinus, that "God is best discerned by an *intellectual touch* of him." We must, says he, "*see with our eyes*, (to use St. John's words,) *we must hear with our ears*, and our hands must handle the *Word of life*; for the soul hath its sense as well as the body." And bishop Hopkins, in his treatise on the new birth, accounts for the Papists denying the knowledge of salvation, by saying, "It is no wonder, that they who will not trust their *natural senses* in the doctrine of transubstantiation, should not trust their *spiritual ones* in the doctrine of assurance."

III. But instead of proving the point by multiplying quotations, let me intreat you, sir, to weigh the following observations in the balance of *reason*.

1. Do not all grant, there is such a thing as moral sense in the world, and that to be utterly void of it, is to be altogether unfit for social life? If you had given a friend the greatest proofs of your love, would not he be inexcusable, if he *felt* no gratitude, and had absolutely no *sense* of your kindness. Now, if moral sense and *feeling* are universally allowed be-
tween

tween man and man, in civil life, why should it appear incredible, or irrational, that there should be such a thing, between God and man, in the divine life ?

* * * * *

4. To conclude; if material objects cannot be perceived by man in his present state, but through the medium of one or other of his bodily senses; by a parity of reason, spiritual objects cannot be discovered, but through one or other of the senses which belong to the inward man. God being a spirit, cannot be worshipped in truth, unless he is known in spirit. You may as soon imagine, how a blind man, by reasoning on what he feels or tastes, can get true ideas of light and colours, as how one, who has no spiritual senses opened, can, by all his reasoning and guessing, attain an experimental knowledge of the invisible God.

Thus, from the joint testimony of SCRIPTURE, of our CHURCH, and of REASON, it appears, that spiritual senses are a blessed reality. I have dwelt so long on the proof of their existence for two reasons. First, They are of infinite use in religion. Saving faith cannot subsist and act without them. If St. Paul's definition of that grace be just, if it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," it must be a principle of spiritual life, more or less attended with the exercise of these senses; according to the poetic and evangelical lines of Dr. Young,

————— "My heart awake,

"FEELS the great truths: To FEEL is to be fir'd,

: "And to believe, Lorenzo, is to FEEL."

Till professors see the necessity of believing in this manner, they rest in a refined form of godliness. To the confidence of the Antinomians, they may, indeed, join the high profession of the foolish virgins. They may even crown their partial assent to the truths of the gospel with the zeal of Phari-

sees, and the regularity of moralists; but still they stop short of the *new creation*, the *new birth*, the *life of God* in the soul of man. Nay more, they stumble at some of the most important truths of Christianity, and think the discoveries that sound believers have of Christ and the spiritual world, are enthusiastical delusions, or, at least, extraordinary favours, which they can very well do without. Thus, even while they allow the power of godliness in others, they rest satisfied without experiencing it in themselves.

Secondly, What I shall write will depend very much on the existence of spiritual senses; and if this letter convinces you, that they are opened in every new-born soul, you will more easily believe Christ can and does manifest himself by that proper medium; and my letters on divine manifestations will meet with a less prejudiced reader.

That Emmanuel, *the light of the world*, may direct me to write with soberness and truth, and you to read with attention and candour, is the sincere prayer of, sir, your's, &c.

SECOND LETTER.

SIR,

HAVING proved, in my first letter, the existence of the spiritual senses, to which the Lord manifests himself I shall now enter upon that subject, by letting you know, as far as my pen can do it, I. What is the *nature* of that manifestation, which makes the believer more than conqueror over sin and death.

1. Mistake me not, sir, for the pleasure of calling me enthusiast. I do not insist, as you may imagine, upon a manifestation of the voice, body, or blood of our Lord to our external senses. Pilate heard Christ's voice, the Jews saw
his

his body, the soldiers handled it, and some of them were literally sprinkled with his blood; but this answered no spiritual end. They knew not God manifest in the flesh.

2. Nor do I understand such a knowledge of our Redeemer's doctrine, offices, promises, and performances, as the natural man can attain, by the force of his understanding and memory. All carnal professors, all foolish virgins, by conversing with true Christians, hearing gospel sermons, and reading evangelical books, attain to the historical and doctrinal knowledge of Jesus Christ. Their understandings are informed; but, alas! their hearts remain unchanged.— Acquainted with the letter, they continue ignorant of the spirit. Boasting, perhaps, of the greatness of Christ's salvation, they remain altogether unsaved; and, full of talk about what he hath done for them, they know nothing of *Christ in them, the hope of glory.*

3. Much less do I mean such a representation of our Lord's person and sufferings, as the natural man can form to himself, by the force of a warm imagination. Many, by seeing a striking picture of Jesus bleeding on the cross, or hearing a pathetic discourse on his agony in the garden, are deeply affected, and melted into tears. They raise in themselves a lively idea of a great and good man unjustly tortured to death; their soft passions are wrought upon, and pity fills their heaving breasts. But, alas! they remain strangers to the revelation of the Son of God by the Holy Ghost. The murder of Julius Cæsar, pathetically described, would have the same effect upon them, as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A deep play would touch them as easily as a deep sermon, and much to the same purpose; for in either case, their impressions and their tears are generally wiped away together.

4. Nor yet do I understand good desires, meltings of heart,

victories over particular corruptions, a confidence that the Lord can and will save us, power to stay ourselves on some promises, gleams of joy, rays of comfort, enlivening hopes, touches of love; no, not even foretastes of Christian liberty, and of the good word of God. These are rather the delightful drawings of the Father, than the powerful revelation of the Son. These, like the star, that led the wise men for a time, then disappeared, and appeared again, are helps and encouragements to come to Christ, and not a divine union with him by the revelation of himself.

I can more easily tell you, sir, what this revelation is not, than what it is. The tongues of men and angels want proper words to express the sweetness and glory, with which the Son of God visits the souls that cannot rest without him. This blessing is not to be described, but enjoyed. It is to be *written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on paper, or tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.*

The revelation of Christ, by which a carnal professor becomes a holy and happy possessor of the faith, is a supernatural, spiritual, experimental manifestation of the spirit, power, and love, and sometimes of the person of God manifest in the flesh, whereby he is known and enjoyed in a manner altogether new: as new as the knowledge of a man, who never tasted any thing but bread and water, would have of honey and wine, suppose, being dissatisfied with the best descriptions of those rich productions of nature, he actually tasted them for himself.

This manifestation is, sooner or later, in a higher or lower degree, vouchsafed to every sincere seeker, through the medium of one or more of the spiritual senses opened in his soul, in a gradual or instantaneous manner, as it pleases God. No sooner is the veil of unbelief, which covers the heart, rent
through

through the agency of the Spirit, and the efforts of the soul struggling into a living belief of the word; no sooner, I say, is the door of faith opened, than Christ, who stood at the door and knocked, comes in, and discovers himself full of grace and truth. Then the tabernacle of God is with man. His kingdom comes with power. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, spread through the new-born soul; eternal life begins; heaven is opened on earth; the conscious heir of glory cries, Abba, Father; and from blessed experience can witness, that he is come to "Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

If this manifestation is duly improved, the effects of it are admirable. The believer's heart, now set at liberty from the guilt and dominion of sin, and drawn by the love of Jesus, pants after greater conformity to his holy will, and mounts up to him in prayer and praise. His life is a course of cheerful evangelical obedience, and his most common actions become good works, done to the glory of God. If he walks up to his privileges, outward objects entangle him no more. Having found the great I AM, the eternal Substance, he looks upon all created things as shadows. Man, the most excellent of all, appears to him altogether lighter than vanity. Yea, doubtless, he counts all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; esteeming them but dung, that he may win Christ, and, to the last, be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ; that, by new discoveries of himself, he may know him and the power of his resurrection
every

III. Though I contend only for those discoveries of Christ which are made by the *internal* senses, because such only are promised to *all*; yet I cannot without contradicting scripture, deny, that the *external* senses have been wrought upon in some manifestations. When Abraham saw his Saviour's day, he was, it seems, allowed to wash his feet with water, (*Gen. xviii. 3.*) as afterwards the penitent harlot did with her tears. And Saul, in his way to Damascus, saw Jesus's glory, and heard his voice both externally and internally, for they "that journeyed with him, saw the light, and heard a voice," though they could not distinguish the words which were spoken. Sometimes also manifestations, though merely internal, have appeared external to those who were favoured with them.

Hence we learn, 1st, That the knowledge of spiritual things, received by spiritual sense, is as clear as the knowledge of natural things, obtained by bodily sense. 2dly, That it is sometimes possible to be doubtful, whether the outward eye or ear is not concerned in particular revelations; since this was not only the case of Samuel, but of St. Paul himself. 3dly, That no stress is to be laid upon the external circumstances, which have sometimes accompanied the revelation of Christ. If aged Simeon had been as blind as old Isaac, and as much disabled from taking the child Jesus in his arms as the paralytic, the internal revelation he had of Christ could have made him say with the same assurance, "Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." If the apostle had not been struck to the ground, and his eyes dazzled by outward light, his conversion would not have been less real, provided he had been inwardly humbled and enlightened. And, if Thomas, waving the carnal demonstration he insisted upon, had experienced only in his inner man, that Christ is the resurrection and the life, he could have confessed him, with as great a consciousness he was not mistaken, as when he cried out, "My Lord, and my God!"

I am, sir, your's, &c.

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